

Collaboration by State Agencies

Issues related to Career and
Technical Education (ORS 344.125)

December 2019



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Executive Summary

This is a joint report from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (HECC-CCWD), and Bureau of Labor and Industries' Apprenticeship and Training Division (BOLI-ATD) required by Oregon Revised Statute 344.125. The purpose of this report is to highlight the multi-faceted partnership between agencies in the area of long term planning and implementation of goals related to Career and Technical Education (CTE) and registered apprenticeship.

In aligning workforce and education, both CTE and apprenticeship provide classroom instruction with workforce training—integrating rigorous academic, technical, and employability skills within a career context. Program curricula are vetted by employers or industry groups to ensure that coursework prepares students for entry into high-demand fields and is aligned with current industry standards. Classroom instruction is reinforced by hands-on application to give learners a deeper understanding of the field. Students may also elect to earn college credits and industry-recognized credentials that will prepare them for immediate employment as well as post-secondary enrollment.

CTE and registered apprenticeship also share a similar history facing stigmas of what or who CTE and registered apprenticeship is for, access and retention issues for marginalized populations are just a few examples that reflect barriers to accessing quality CTE and registered apprenticeship programming. In addition, there are insufficient support services for underserved populations to persist and succeed in these programs. However, research shows that CTE and registered apprenticeship have overlapping structures and content, including work-based learning and career exploration coursework, inviting an opportunity to build more deliberate linkages between the two. As a result, there are persistent gaps in access and opportunity in academic and workforce attainment.

Over the past several years, ODE, HECC-CCWD, and BOLI have focused on addressing these persistent and predictable gaps by increasing opportunities and access for internships, apprenticeships, and accelerated learning coursework. It is critical that our joint effort results in reducing barriers for Oregonians transitioning into post-secondary programs and the workforce. This joint report captures the collaborative work and joint efforts of ODE, HECC-CCWD, and BOLI during the 2019 calendar year:

- 1) Strengthening and expanding registered apprenticeship in Oregon
- 2) Addressing barriers to accessing and participating in pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship
- 3) Continuing the alignment between workforce and education

Background

Beginning with Oregon House Bill 3362 through the latest iteration of legislation, there remains a strong emphasis on promoting collaboration between ODE, HECC-CCWD, and BOLI. The agencies are required to meet four times each year and subsequently to submit a joint report reflecting collective progress on the development and implementation of goals outlined in ORS 344.125. Since HB 3362, amendments to ORS 344.125 were made to include youth job development organizations in 2011-2013 (HB 2689). In addition, HB 2912 was the latest of legislation requiring the agencies to develop and implement long-term goals that encourage the establishment of joint advisory committees related to CTE and that address barriers inhibiting student movement from high schools to post-secondary programs and workforce. An amendment was made to ORS 344.125 (2)(c) adding the following strategies:

- (A) Make more effective use of resources;
- (B) Promote articulation and pathways between high school programs and post-secondary school programs;
- (C) Ensure that current industry workforce needs are considered and that curriculum is kept current with state standards; and
- (D) Increase opportunities for internships, apprenticeships and other opportunities that may lead to employment in the region.

Strengthening and Expanding Registered Apprenticeship

Oregon has been the recipient of consecutive U.S Department of Labor (DOL) State Apprenticeship Expansion grants to continue the mission of expanding registered apprenticeship and making apprenticeship opportunities available to every American. Since 2016, these investments have supported ODE, OED, HECC, and BOLI in expanding apprenticeship, strengthening industry partnerships and innovative strategies that diversify apprenticeship, piloting fast-growing and high-tech industry registered apprenticeship, and supporting organizations focused on increasing diversity.

Advancing Oregon Apprenticeship (AOA) is the collective work and efforts from ODE, HECC-CCWD, HECC-Workforce Investment Division (HECC-WID), and Oregon Employment Department (OED), supporting identified core areas of the strengthening and expansion of apprenticeship. Oregon has experienced a 26.5% increase (8,321 to 10,527 apprentices) in registered apprentices since June 2016, but more work is needed to promote registered apprenticeship as Oregon's preferred training model.

The promotion and expansion of registered apprenticeship is a priority for Oregon's workforce system. Oregon's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan specifically calls on state agencies to expand structured work-based learning aligning with the CTE State Plan---Perkins V and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which also puts work-based learning as a focus of program quality and transition from high school to post-secondary opportunities. The promotion of registered apprenticeship in the State of Oregon has resulted in the expansion of the training model into the manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology industries, but more resources are needed to scale small regional successes into sustainable statewide programs.

Expansion of Oregon Apprenticeship

Information Technology- Apprenti Oregon

The Apprenti Oregon project has expanded from its pilot site in Lane County to Deschutes County. Workforce Boards in Deschutes and Lane counties are currently working together to register and support a statewide Apprenti Oregon project for four occupations: network security administrator, IT support professional, website developer, and software developer. Through various partnerships and a Federal U.S. Department of Education grant, Oregon Pathways to Apprenticeship in Computer Science has focused on creating a future workforce pipeline to support these efforts.

Apprenti, Central Oregon. Central Oregon (Jefferson, Deschutes, and Crook counties) is home to more than 128 tech companies that are growing and expanding, but one of the biggest barriers to their sustainability and expansion is lack of skilled tech talent. According to a poll conducted by Technology Association of Oregon's Central Oregon Chapter in January of 2018, from the responses of more than forty companies, there is a combined need for more than 500 technical positions.

Although Oregon State University Cascades Campus, located in Deschutes County, offers a bachelor's degree in computer science, the 2018 graduating class totaled eight people. All of these graduates are currently employed full time with several of the 128 local tech companies. The computer science program will expand over time, but it is not yet producing enough graduates to meet the need of Central Oregon tech companies.

As a result of the large and unmet employment need, East Cascades Works (EC Works) and Technology Association of Oregon (TAO) partnered to implement a tech apprenticeship called Apprenti. This model has been successfully implemented in the state of Washington and with the assistance of Apprenti staff, TAO and EC Works are in the process of registering the Apprenti Oregon program and launching a 10-person Software Developer cohort in May 2018 with an anticipated completion of June 2019.

In addition to the initial cohort of software developer apprentices, TAO and EC Works will also explore registering a standard for a data center technician to create a program to address the needs of the Google and Apple Data Centers in Crook County. Overall, TAO and EC Works expect to register 24 apprentices in their program, with 20 completing over the life of the grant. Additional funding resources will ensure that staff from both EC Works and TAO have the capacity to grow and support the initial implementation costs of the program. Funding will also go toward apprentice tuition, which is expensive to develop in a way that keeps pace with the fast-paced tech world. Funding for staff and tuition will allow Apprenti, Central Oregon the time it needs to gain support and program income to sustain the program beyond the life of the grant.

Healthcare Medical Assistant-Southwestern Oregon

In August 2016, Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board (SOWIB) convened a diverse group of CEOs, executives, and other healthcare leaders from Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties to define a shared agenda to develop a medical assistant registered apprenticeship that could be implemented by a network of organizations and community support partners. That group formed the backbone of what came to be known as the Southwestern Oregon Healthcare Industry Partnership (SOHIP).

Southwestern Oregon Medical Assistant Registered Apprenticeship Program. Among the first workforce issues identified by SOHIP was the lack of appropriately credentialed medical assistants working in the field. To solve this problem, SOWIB created a two-phase approach. Phase I focused on providing incumbent workers with the easiest, most cost-effective route to certification possible. The primary component of this fast-tracked route was to provide a short-term certification exam prep course (facilitated by a qualified instructor) for those who met eligibility criteria by virtue of having one year or more of experience in the field. The exam prep course was followed by certification testing proctored locally at partner sites, including primarily the WorkSource Coos office. Over the course of approximately a year-long

process, over 200 medical assistants successfully completed certification, with an exam pass rate of over 95% that far exceeded both state and federal averages, according to data from the National Healthcare Association (NHA).

Strengthening Oregon Apprenticeship

BOLI Approved Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

Pre-apprenticeship programs are designed to prepare high school students—especially underrepresented or historically underserved students, or those with emergent skills—to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program and have a documented partnership with at least one registered apprenticeship committee(s). The services and training provided through pre-apprenticeship programs prepare individuals to enter and succeed in registered apprenticeship programs. Pre-apprenticeship programs in Oregon demonstrate successful pathways to registered apprenticeship opportunities in Oregon. Every program approved by the Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council has a documented partnership with at least one registered apprenticeship program sponsor to create career pathway opportunities through industry-based training, mentorship, and classroom instruction.

While pre-apprenticeship programs are a key tool in the development of a talent pipeline for industry, most pre-apprenticeship programs survive on grant funding and industry contributions. These private non-profit programs struggle to secure the necessary funding to assist potential apprentices. A stable source of funding for approved pre-apprenticeship programs focused on historically underserved and underrepresented populations is essential to building equal access to registered apprenticeship.

To date, CTE programs in over 20 Oregon high schools have become certified pre-apprenticeship programs offering strong career pathways in HVAC and electrical, trades, and construction. Some schools use curricula that align with that used by the apprenticeship sponsor. In some, the community college provides the instruction, and in others, the employer sponsor provides the training while the community college provides accelerated learning.

In order to expand the scope of pre-apprenticeship services outside of the Portland metro area, BOLI has also contracted with Oregon State University (OSU) to develop an on-line pre-apprenticeship training suite. The on-line component will replicate the classroom component of a typical pre-apprenticeship program electronically, allowing students to access portions of the pre-apprenticeship training curricula that will be supplemented with hands-on modules offered by secondary schools as part of a CTE program of study, or to adult learners at a community college. This Distance Learning model should go on-line in September 2020 and may serve to increase the capacity of Portland-based programs to prepare more students and disadvantaged individuals for entry into a registered apprenticeship program.

Rural Technical Assistance Seminars

BOLI and HECC collaboratively use funds to provide technical assistance in the development of pre-apprenticeship partnerships in geographic areas outside of the greater Portland metropolitan area. The majority of pre-apprenticeship programs are currently located in the Portland metro area and lack the necessary infrastructure and funding to expand to other areas of the state. Educators and employers outside of Portland continue to look for efficient ways to create a talent pipeline and would benefit from local pre-apprenticeship programs. Conducting outreach and developing curriculums to underserved areas would be an effective platform for expanding apprenticeship in Oregon.

BOLI and HECC will convene four two-day regional workshops in Douglas County, Eastern Oregon counties, East Multnomah County, and High Desert counties to support the development of a talent pipeline from high school through employment as a registered apprentice. Working with current pre-apprenticeship program operators and local workforce boards, and focused upon locally adopted sector strategies, the agencies will

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convene school districts, employers, workforce boards, and local apprenticeship programs to discuss strategies for using existing high school programs to curate talent in occupations that have not historically been apprenticed.

Integrated Marketing Strategy

Apprenticeship stakeholders often request a single platform for all messaging about registered apprenticeship because many stakeholders are forced to navigate multiple websites in order to find what they need. As part of the integrated marketing strategy, HECC will work with a vendor to redesign Oregonapprenticeship.org, making it more accessible and easier to navigate. HECC will work with ATD, OED, and ODE in order to make the changes and assimilate information about registered apprenticeship from all agencies into one location. The new website will allow users to become more knowledgeable about the registered apprenticeship and guide them to the apprenticeship resources they need at the local and state level.

An integrated marketing strategy will give Oregon's registered apprenticeship system an opportunity to create a unified and seamless communication platform for stakeholders. Continued investment in standardizing the message surrounding registered apprenticeship not only benefits potential employers and applicants, but also helps registered apprenticeship stakeholders by creating consistency and reducing confusion about an already complex system.

In collaboration with a vendor and other state agencies, HECC will create an integrated marketing strategy for Oregon's registered apprenticeship system. The marketing strategy will include updating Oregon's registered apprenticeship system website, creating new marketing materials, and redesigning existing marketing materials for consistency and new information. New marketing materials are needed in order to meet the demands for information about registered apprenticeship from Oregon's workforce and education system, as well as the Oregon legislature. The updated materials will include outreach and communication to parents, community partners, organizations working with populations experiencing systemic barriers, and the underrepresented, to explain the benefits of and generate support for career pathways through registered apprenticeship.

Addressing Barriers to Accessing and Participating in CTE, Pre-Apprenticeship, and Registered Apprenticeship

Increasing Access, Equity, and Diversity in CTE

Oregon continues to invest in building aligned systems to ensure learner success. In collaboration with BOLI and HECC, equity is a core focus of our work as we strive to ensure that all Oregonians have equally predictive post-secondary success. ODE's Secondary and Post-Secondary Transitions team and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission have adopted the Oregon Equity Lens as a tool for continuous improvement and a way to center equity in all leadership actions. This model leverages data to identify and address opportunity gaps, expand access to high-quality CTE for each and every learner, and build systems to ensure learner success.

As part of ODE's equity goals and Perkins V vision for equity and access in CTE for all learners, the collaboration internally and externally with ODE, HECC, BOLI, and OED bears positive outcomes for Oregonians. Utilizing CTE as a strategy to address drop-out prevention, chronic absenteeism, graduation rates, and student performance demonstrates the strength of applied learning, quality program design, and rigorous and relevant curriculum. In addition, with the requirement of having seamless transitions from high school to post-secondary, learners not only experience relevant and rigorous learning, but are afforded

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accelerated learning options to finish their post-secondary certificates and/or degrees at a faster rate to enter the workforce.

Further, as more high school CTE programs of study (POS) partner with labor and industry to become BOLI-approved pre-apprenticeship programs, the duplication of pathways is reduced, which decreases confusion about how to access these programs. Most importantly, the registered apprenticeship becomes highlighted and sought as a viable post-secondary opportunity along with college, university, and workforce pathways.

Child Care Assistance for Pre-Apprentices

Funding for supportive services for pre-apprenticeship program participants and graduates incentivizes individuals to enroll in pre-apprenticeship programs and increases retention rates for apprentices once they start a registered apprenticeship program. Oregon intends to address the growth of pre-apprenticeship from a variety of angles.

For example, funds to provide child care subsidies—similar to the “BOLI Plus” program, which currently operates through interagency agreement between BOLI and DHS for apprentices in highway construction trades—could expand to pre-apprenticeship programs and for apprenticeship programs outside the highway construction trades.

BOLI is currently providing limited child care assistance to assist pre-apprentices to attend training in an OSATC-approved pre-apprenticeship program. Child care assistance supplements, and does not replace, any other child care payments being made on behalf of the pre-apprentice. Child care assistance is based on an evaluation of financial need and a written statement by the pre-apprentice that they would not be able to meet the requirements of the pre-apprenticeship program if not for the assistance provided. Child care subsidies require that the child care provider be either certified with the Oregon Child Care Division (CCD), or (if exempt from CCD certification) included on the Child Care Provider Listing with the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS). Subsidies are provided monthly during the time that the pre-apprentice is attending pre-apprenticeship training.

Maximum subsidy rates are a percentage of the actual costs accrued, up to the DHS Child Care Maximum Rates for Group Area A for a Certified Center for each pre-apprentice who receives support. BOLI, through its vendor, also assists pre-apprentices receiving child care subsidies in determining whether they are eligible for the dependent child care tax exemption and/or Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) by directing them to the location of relevant State of Oregon information and materials. To date, nine pre-apprentices have availed themselves of the child support subsidy program; only one has failed to complete their pre-apprenticeship program, due to an inability to locate a qualifying child care provider.

Cultural Competency Training

In the initial round of SAE grant funding, ATD commenced the development of a cultural competency curriculum that would incorporate diversity training into the related training curriculum for all registered apprenticeship programs. The cultural competency training explains the types of implicit biases, the difference between implicit bias and other forms of discrimination (prejudice, stereotyping, harassment), and ways to lead a discussion on implicit bias and the impact it has on customers and coworkers, as well as methods to promote inclusion in the workplace. Curriculum development includes review and evaluation of current diversity training programs in Oregon to determine whether they fit the building, construction, industrial, and manufacturing industry needs and to ensure that every apprenticeship program in the state has access to an approved trainer to deliver the curriculum.

State apprenticeship expansion funding has been used to provide training to at least additional 50 instructors, expanding the ability to ensure that every Oregon apprentice is able to complete the curriculum.

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Oregon State University (OSU) will deliver a final copy of the “High 5” cultural competency training materials to ATD by the end of 2019. In collaboration with ATD, OSU will provide up to three training sessions to teach a total of up to 125 instructors on how to deliver the curriculum by September 15, 2020. Commencing in 2021, all apprenticeship committees will be required to include some form of cultural competency or diversity training as a part of their program curricula.

Alignment between Workforce and Education

Higher Education Coordinating Commission-Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development

In Oregon, the HECC and community college district boards play a role in the approval of associate degrees and oversight of curricular programming. Currently, relationships vary between registered apprenticeship programs and community colleges; however, most community colleges provide related instruction to registered apprenticeship programs based on individual apprenticeship program needs and requirements.

Related instruction can happen on a community college campus or at a training center, depending on the relationship between the partners. Other registered apprenticeship programs and community colleges offer similar, competitive programming. The transfer of credit from a registered apprenticeship or training program to a local community college varies within the state and is dependent upon a variety of factors, including course learning outcomes and community college degree requirements.

Oregon Community Colleges Apprenticeship Consortium

The Oregon Community College Apprenticeship Consortium's primary responsibility is ongoing monitoring of current statewide community college registered apprenticeship programs. This involves: reviewing member colleges' consortium-related programs; updating and reviewing individual courses to assure continued compliance with outcomes and standards, revisions, and updates; and improving existing programs with new and emerging industry needs and standards.

The Oregon community colleges that offer related instruction for registered apprenticeship do so in a way that is aligned with the federal Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium (RACC). The goal of this federal framework is to facilitate the articulation of the registered apprenticeship certificate for college credit on a national scale. The initiative encourages colleges to strengthen and develop the relationships between registered apprenticeship and post-secondary institutions, enhance the understanding of and response to the needs of apprentices as working students, and advocate for the flexibility needed to earn academic credit for their registered apprenticeship experience so that they can pursue additional education and degrees needed for their career path.

In Oregon, apprentices who are taking their related instruction through one of 13 community college registered apprenticeship programs also have the opportunity to simultaneously obtain post-secondary degrees and certificates. Presently, there are 13 community colleges offering three pathways in construction trades, electrician, and industrial mechanics and maintenance technology (three Associate of Applied Science [AAS] degrees and six certificates).

HECC/CCWD continues to facilitate requested development of statewide degrees or certificates and advise sponsoring/lead colleges and consortia of the program approval requirements for the creation of these awards. HECC/CCWD provides examples of consortium bylaws and other related materials, encourages a minimum of one annual consortium meeting per year for each statewide degree and certificate, works with colleges to identify and resolve issues that interfere with the student benefits associated with statewide degrees and certificates, and provides college points of contact, the updated annual list of statewide degree and certificate lead college and participating college contacts.

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Additionally, HECC/CCWD partners with the Oregon Community College Apprenticeship Consortium (OCCAC) to ensure apprenticeship curriculum alignment and program integrity for 13 of the 17 Oregon community colleges. OCCAC continues to oversee the implementation of three statewide degrees with certificates of completion for construction trades, electrical, and industrial mechanics and maintenance technology. These degrees remain a fixture in the career pathways system for apprenticeship and continued alignment with CTE.

During 2019, HECC/CCWD, ODE, and BOLI collaborated with OCCAC on a process improvement initiative related to the annual submission and approval of statewide certificates and associate degrees in registered apprenticeship. The goals of this initiative were to create clear, efficient, robust, and aligned processes for participating colleges that will then lead to continued alignment of statewide program outcomes, and aligned pathways for apprentices. The state agency partners also worked closely with OCCAC on an ongoing, facilitated feedback process to develop updated promotional materials on the role of community colleges as partners in the registered apprenticeship system. Additionally, HECC/CCWD and ODE consulted with OCCAC members on the development of the CTE State Plan. Members were provided multiple opportunities to give feedback on the state plan as it was developed, and some participated in the work-based learning stakeholder group.

Outside of its partnerships with OCCAC in 2019, HECC/CCWD also helped guide one college through the development and approval process of a Non-Credit Training Certificate (NCTC) for completion of the classroom instruction component of a software developer registered apprenticeship program operated by Apprenti.

HECC/CCWD continues as a member of the statewide CTE Revitalization Grant Advisory Committee. In addition, HECC/CCWD and ODE share commitments in the work of advancing equity in CTE and at the federal Perkins project level. The ODE Education Specialist continues to make an impact through coordination of resources to various apprenticeship programs. Additionally, HECC/CCWD is working to improve data collections to provide a more complete picture of CTE in Oregon.

All 17 community colleges are actively engaging with partners in CTE in grades 9-12. Several promising strategies are emerging in this work:

- Hiring staff members at the community college whose job is to provide outreach and advising to high school students to encourage a college-going culture
- Developing short-term entry-level stackable credentials that incentivize dual enrollment in CTE coursework in high school
- Co-locating or closely locating CTE coursework so that students in partnering high schools have access to college-level CTE courses
- Working with counseling staff to share information about career pathway roadmaps and program of study templates

In addition, colleges have leveraged the various regional efforts of STEM Hubs, Regional Achievement Compacts, Eastern Promise, and similar models throughout the state to develop strong CTE connections with high school partners.

As part of connecting stakeholders to Career Pathways, a director of the Statewide Pathways Initiative was hired to support internal and external stakeholders in the following ways:

- Working with ODE staff to discuss potential revision of program of study templates to make them more user-friendly and culturally relevant to high school counseling staff, students, and parents

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- Developing opportunities for ODE staff and college staff to share best practices for career pathways throughout grades 9-14 at Oregon Pathways Alliance meetings and other venues
- Developing a Sector Strategy Career Pathways Framework/Tool that will include the continuum of career pathways in CTE areas at both secondary and post-secondary levels (in partnership with OED)

Oregon Pathways to Apprenticeship in Computer Science (OrPACS)

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE), in partnership with employers, workforce development boards, and post-secondary institutions, will develop a competency-based pre-apprenticeship for computer science. This program will be available to high school students in rural and urban communities as an overlay to existing CTE pathways or a framework for a new CTE pathway. The pre-apprenticeship will be aligned with an Oregon registered apprenticeship for technology fields—Apprenti—currently being implemented in Lane County and Central Oregon. The purpose of the Pathways to STEM Apprenticeship for High School Career and Technical Education (CTE) Students (Pathways to STEM Apprenticeship grants) program is to expand and improve the transition of high school CTE students to post-secondary education and employment through apprenticeships in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields—including computer science—that begin during high school.

Objectives for the project are to

- 1) Increase the number of high school students who have verifiable competencies necessary to successfully transition into work, apprenticeship, or post-secondary programs;
- 2) Increase the number of rural high schools offering a pathway to a competency-based pre-apprenticeship program;
- 3) Increase the number of historically underserved students and those who historically have not had access who choose to enter a computer science pathway that leads to a competency-based pre-apprenticeship; and
- 4) Develop a statewide collaborative partnership of workforce investment boards, employers, and educators to monitor and sustain the work of this project.

During the first year of OrPACS, much attention and focus was spent on leveraging regional partnerships, developing the OrPACS Steering Committee, and implementing programming.

As of the close of this fiscal year, we do not yet have participant numbers on which to report. However, this past year generated valuable partnerships to assist with program development and piloting programming for a small sample size of students. We have seen progress made on the four goals highlighted in this report.

Conclusion

ODE, HECC-CCWD, and BOLI-ATD are committed to aligning CTE programs to the needs of the regional, state, and local labor market. Oregon's workforce investments should prioritize programs that provide direct workplace exposure, making the workplace an extension of the classroom and providing real work experience for potential employees. Workforce investments should capitalize upon educational investments so that students engaged in local CTE programs can find a pathway to local employers.

Toward that end, BOLI-ATD will continue to work with ODE and HECC to bridge the gap between education and industry by promoting the use of CTE programs of study as vehicles for pre-apprenticeship programs creating a direct pathway from education to employment.