

# Collaboration by State Agencies on Issues Related to Career and Technical Education

ORS 344.125

December 2020



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## **Executive Summary**

Over the last year, ODE, HECC, and BOLI-ATD have partnered on producing two key state plans—the Oregon CTE State Plan and the Oregon Apprenticeship Strategic Plan—that address the original directives and goals of ORS 344.125. This report is a high-level overview of how those plans demonstrate the collaboration between the three agencies along with continued barriers to aligning agency goals.

This report highlights collaborative work, progress, and challenges, including:

- Bridges between registered apprenticeship and CTE
- Investments in equity and access strategies to strengthen workforce and educational systems
- Equity efforts around career pathways and opportunities for Oregon’s most vulnerable populations
- Expansion efforts of registered apprenticeship and CTE into emerging industry sectors and rural areas of the state
- Lack of funding to support postsecondary education and CTE
- Need for broadband and technology infrastructure in Oregon

## Background

In 2011, the Oregon State Legislature mandated that ODE, HECC, and BOLI identify and address barriers to accessing CTE in Oregon. Over the years, this collaborative has grown to include other state agencies, including the Oregon Employment Department (OED) and the Department of Human Services (DHS). The identified agencies registered apprenticeships as an area of common strategic focus. Moving forward, this shared focus will expand to include growth of equitable work-based learning opportunities more generally in addition to targeted growth of registered apprenticeships.

Oregon developed two state plans that address CTE and workforce development during the 2019-20 academic year. Plans were created with ongoing dialogue and partnership to leverage and strengthen the work of improving high quality work-based learning and CTE tied to workforce needs.

### *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V)*

Entering the end of the 2017-19 biennium, the U.S. Department of Education reauthorized the Carl T. Perkins Act through the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V)*. Oregon's plan supports the creation of a future-ready Oregon workforce and aligns state and federal initiatives (i.e., Every Student Succeeds Act, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act [WIOA], Higher Education Act, Individuals with Disabilities Act).

The [CTE State Plan](#) focuses on achieving the CTE vision of re-imagining and transforming learners' experiences in order to enhance their future prospects; empower their communities; and ensure equity in an inclusive, sustainable, innovation-based economy. Oregon is committed to ensuring that historically and currently marginalized populations experience belonging and success in the CTE program of their choice.

### *Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA): Oregon's Combined State Plan*

[Oregon's Combined State Plan](#) reflects the work of multiple agencies and organizations. Each of these entities has its own missions, visions, and values; this plan weaves these together on behalf of the broader workforce development system to realize equitable prosperity for all Oregonians. Delivering on this requires keen attention to the employment and skill needs of business and industry—both now and into the future—and requires access to timely education and training for all individuals that is valued in the marketplace and results in or creates a pathway to self-sufficiency. This plan demonstrates Oregon's commitment to continuous improvement in the workforce development system by aligning priorities and strategies to maximize resources currently within the workforce development system, and by leveraging additional resources not yet a part of the system.

## Highlights of 2019-2020 School Year

This collaborative of state agencies recommends that the original goals of this directive align more closely with the recently enacted CTE State Plan (Perkins V) along with the Oregon Apprenticeship Agency Strategic Plan (2020-23) landscape through:

- creating statewide CTE Programs of Study aligned to workforce priorities identified in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) state plan to better integrate education, workforce, and economic development;
- expanding work-based learning opportunities in equitable ways so that more learners have the professional skills and social capital to be successful when they transfer from education into the workforce; and
- implementing the Oregon Apprenticeship Strategic Plan for 2020-23.

ODE, HECC, and BOLI are committed to working together to establish coherent and relevant career pathways for Oregonians. One example of successful partnership between the agencies is the joint work on Oregon Apprenticeship, which provides resources to educators, workforce partners, and Oregonians to expand registered apprenticeship opportunities.

### **BOLI: Apprenticeship and Training Division**

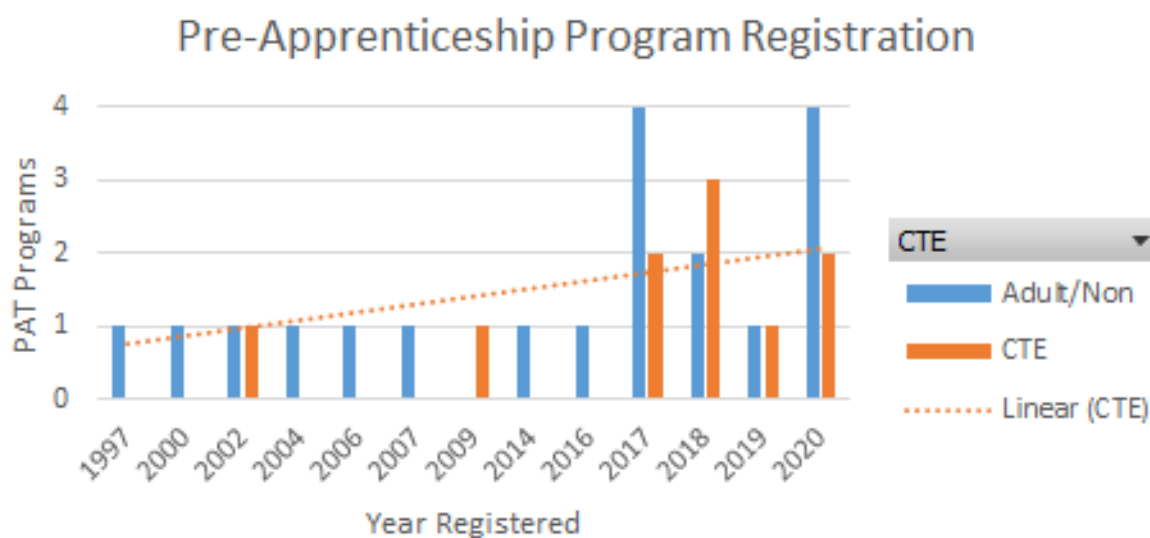
There are currently 10,273 active apprentices in more than 167 registered apprenticeship-training programs in Oregon. Since 2016, BOLI has participated in the Oregon Apprenticeship Cross-Agency work group, which includes the Oregon Employment Department (OED), the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). This partnership allows for a nimble response to emerging and developing workforce needs within Oregon. In 2020, BOLI certified the first-of-its-kind pre-apprenticeship training program for Environmental Services Aides as a rapid response to the COVID-19 crisis.

BOLI, ODE, and OED worked collaboratively with stakeholders to develop pre-apprenticeship training and registered apprenticeship programs in occupations outside of the construction trades, including two rural pre-apprenticeship programs in Central and Southern Oregon (Heart of Oregon and Medford Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Trades [MPACT]), a pre-apprenticeship program for the Information Technology sector in East Multnomah County (Oregon Technologies Pathways), and registered apprenticeship programs for computer coding.

BOLI worked closely with ODE to support the link between high school CTE programs and registered apprenticeship by creating state registered pre-apprenticeship training programs (PATPs) in K-12. Now students participating in these pre-apprenticeship programs in high school have an expedited path into registered apprenticeship and can earn living wages while building skills for their future employment. BOLI currently has 29 active pre-apprenticeship programs, 20 of which have been certified since 2016. Ten of these programs specifically serve youth, with

nine of them operating within CTE programs in high schools throughout the state: Clackamas, Crook, Deschutes, East Multnomah, Jackson, Jefferson, Lane, Marion, and Washington Counties.

Figure 1. Growth of Pre-Apprenticeship and CTE based Pre-Apprenticeship Programs



The HECC-BOLI partnership is committed to increasing the diversity of participation in, and the benefit from, registered apprenticeship programs. This year, through U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) grants, HECC and BOLI-ATD partnered with the Ironworkers Local 29 to create a registered pre-apprenticeship program for previously incarcerated individuals, women and people of color participants and provided direct entry into the ironworkers registered apprenticeship program for participants completing training.

BOLI and ODE created a pre-apprenticeship toolkit to assist adult and youth/CTE programs with the State certification process, as well as guides for industry groups interested in becoming state registered apprenticeship programs. BOLI is in the development phase of an online portal to facilitate the registration and tracking of apprentices and training agents.

### **HECC: Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development**

In 2019-20, the HECC Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (HECC-CCWD) continued its efforts to serve as integral partners in support of a robust CTE system. For example, HECC-CCWD staff served as regular members of the cross-agency Oregon Apprenticeship work group, which brings together agency stakeholders to align the registered apprenticeship system. Through this cross-agency partnership and with HECC-CCWD's ongoing

affiliation with the Oregon Community College Apprenticeship Consortium (OCCAC), three college profiles were developed and launched that highlight the role of Oregon's community colleges as key partners in registered apprenticeship.

HECC-CCWD staff participated in three additional highlighted initiatives this year in support of an accessible, aligned, and equitable CTE system in Oregon. First, HECC-CCWD staff supported engagement of secondary and postsecondary educators, employers, and cross-agency partners in three statewide work-based learning workgroup meetings and a work-based learning survey that helped guide the creation of work-based learning goals and strategies in Oregon's new CTE State Plan. Second, staff began engaging in [Advance CTE's Postsecondary Data Quality Initiative \(PDI\)](#) that will conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of the CTE data infrastructure using the [CTE Data Quality and Use Policy Benchmark Tool](#) that was developed by Advance CTE with input from national, state, and local experts. This needs assessment will be used to create a strategic, two-year action plan for improving CTE data quality. Over the course of the two-year initiative, states are working to strengthen existing CTE data systems and bring together critical stakeholders across agencies and institutions to improve the quality and use of CTE data. Specifically, the objectives for the initiative are to:

- develop the capacity of state and local leaders to improve their CTE data systems and better meet the needs of postsecondary learners;
- improve data quality, literacy, and use in selected states;
- foster a peer sharing network among state leaders in selected states; and
- identify and disseminate promising practices for postsecondary CTE data collection, validation, and effective use nationwide.

The third highlighted HECC-CCWD initiative involves a partnership with ODE on a six-person agency team in [National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity \(NAPE\) Leadership Academy](#) that is focusing on facilitating admission of Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language students into college-level CTE courses and programs, and ensuring that they receive equitable opportunities and treatment in those programs. The leadership academy utilizes the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA), a new requirement of Perkins V that helps regions gather data about employers and industries located in their region that are also looking for trained workers. The team is broadening the focus of the CLNA to be more inclusive of adult students and address some of the issues adult students, especially from marginalized groups, have in accessing education and training, persisting, overcoming barriers, completing their programs, and getting work in their field.

**HECC: Office of Workforce Investments Team**

Since 2016, the HECC Office of Workforce Investments (HECC-OWI) has partnered with BOLI-ATD to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities in Oregon. In the last year, HECC has participated in strategic planning of the apprenticeship system that prioritizes building partnerships and increasing access to businesses and job seekers. Additionally, HECC has worked to increase funding for apprenticeship expansion by receiving a 2020 State Apprenticeship Expansion grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL).

This grant marks the fourth time USDOL has invested in Oregon apprenticeship since 2016. Below is a chart of the grants HECC has received from USDOL.

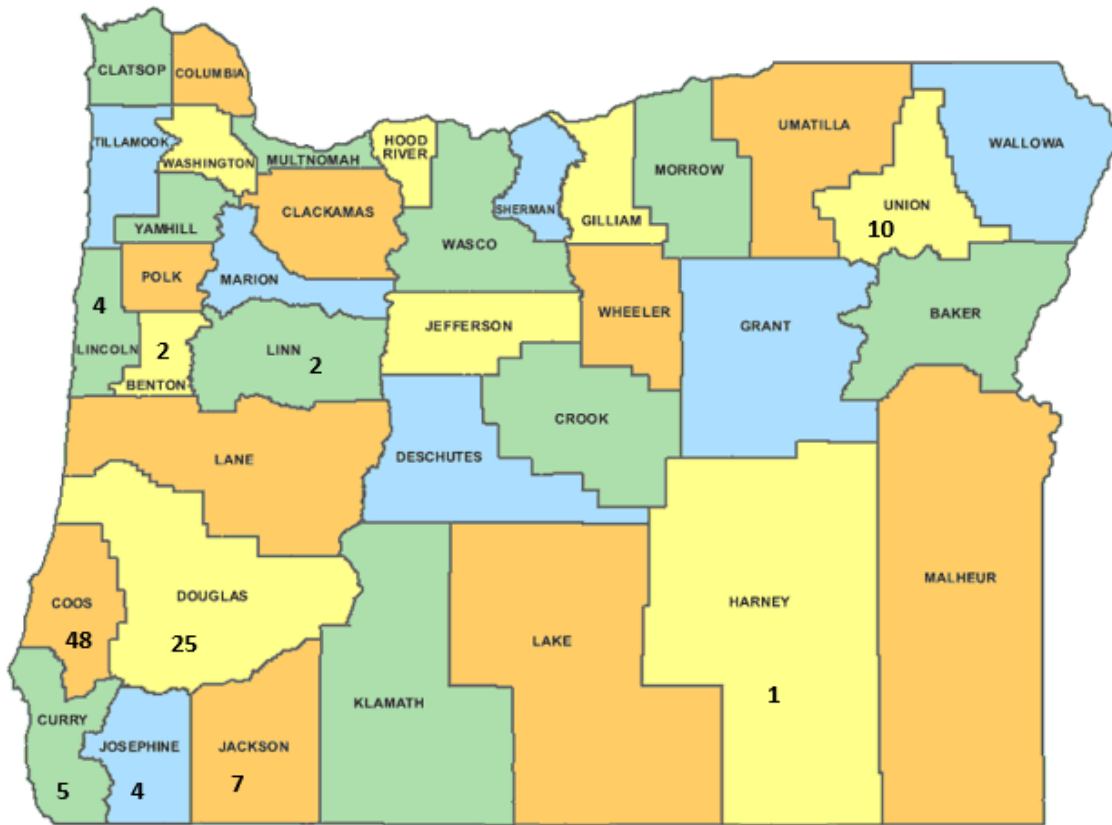
	<u>Round 1</u>	<u>Round 2</u>	<u>Round 3</u>	<u>Round 4</u>
<b>Amount Awarded</b>	\$1.5 million	\$1.8 million	\$1.3 million	\$450,000
<b>Period of Performance</b>	November 2016-April 2021	May 2018-April 2021	July 2019-June 2022	July 2020-June 2023
<b>Number of Apprentices/Pre-Apprentices to be Served</b>	100	120	800	0

With the help of these grants, great progress has been made toward expanding into industries outside of construction. The Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board (SOWIB) created the first healthcare apprenticeship (medical assistant) program in the state. Over the last year, SOWIB has led the effort of expanding the program outside of the local area. The total number of medical assistant apprentices as of November 1, 2020, was 108, with a goal of 350 by 2022. The breakdown of the numbers per county can be found in the map below.



### Medical Assistant Apprentice Numbers by County

As of November 1, 2020



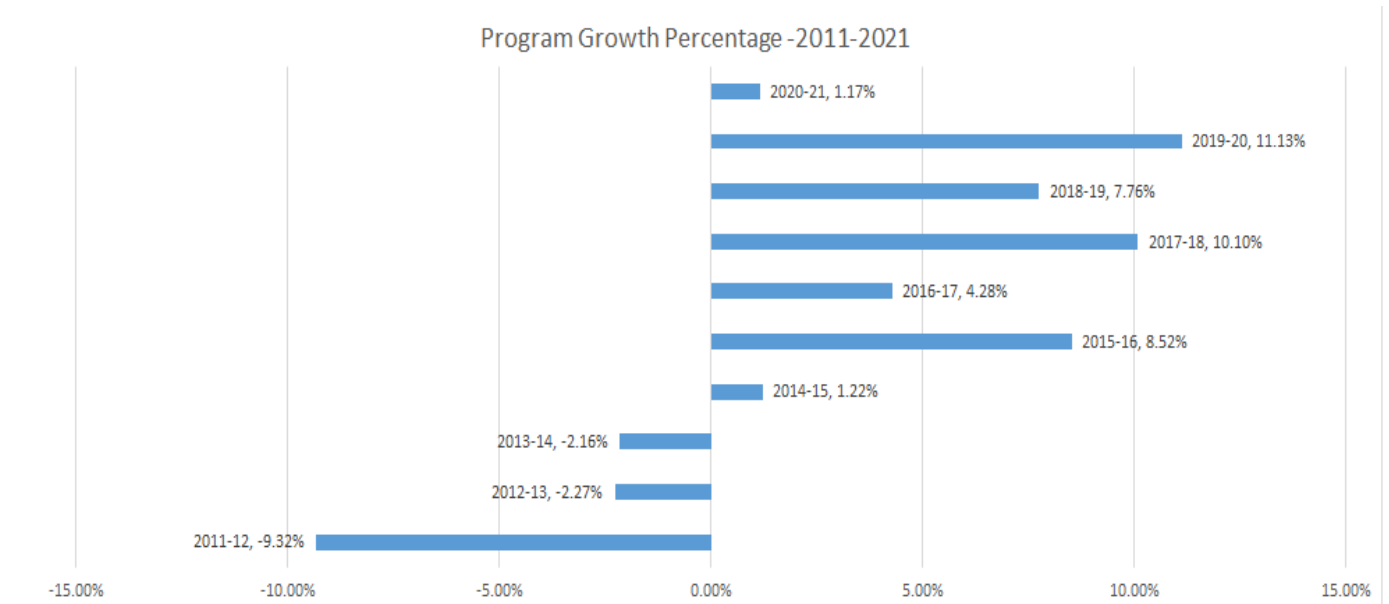
Significant work has also been accomplished around creating training and outreach materials to help customers navigate the apprenticeship system, including the development of a new website, [Oregon Apprenticeship](https://www.oregonapprenticeship.com).

HECC provides a dedicated staff person to manage these grants who assists in coordinating grant goals and deliverables among several state agencies and apprenticeship partners. HECC looks forward to continuing to support the expansion of apprenticeship.

#### **Oregon Department of Education: Secondary-Postsecondary Transitions Team**

CTE in Oregon was experiencing another year of program growth across the state in 2019-20. As indicated in the graph, the Oregon State Legislature has continued to invest in CTE through

various initiatives such as High School Success, CTE Revitalization, and CTE Secondary Career Pathways has contributed to not only program growth, but also improved graduation rates.



*\*The graph above shows the growth percentage among CTE Programs of Study over the last decade. Each year that has a bar to the right of the center line indicates a positive growth in programs.*

The Oregon CTE State Plan serves as a bridge between secondary and postsecondary pathways for learners. While aligning with WIOA and ESSA outcomes, the CTE State Plan development and implementation process highlighted opportunities for improvement and led to several successes for 2019-20, including:

- establishment of Oregon Career Connected Learning through engagement of secondary and postsecondary educators, employers, and cross-agency partners who also identified work-based learning as a priority strategy for education, workforce, and economic development.
- collaboration with BOLI-ATD to create and distribute a pre-apprenticeship toolkit to assist adult and youth programs with the State certification process.
- partnership with BOLI-ATD and local rural areas to facilitate the promotion of pre-apprenticeship at the high school level through technical assistance workshops focused on Oregon Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship, program designs and models, and the State certification process.
- commitment to Oregon Apprenticeship Strategic plan for 2021-2023.

- engagement and participation in Oregon Apprenticeship website re-build and content creation.
- collaboration and facilitation to promote pre-apprenticeship at the high school level through Rural Technical Assistance workshops on Oregon Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship, program design, and Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council certification process.

## **Recommendations**

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that CTE, pre-apprenticeship, and registered apprenticeship programs can be responsive to a rapidly changing landscape for service delivery. However, the ability for individuals in communities underserved by our system to access quality CTE, educational, and other workforce training is directly impacted by the lack of a technology infrastructure and adequate investments in local community college and registered apprenticeship systems.

**Recommendation #1**—Further investment in broadband access for rural communities with lagging economies

In 2018, the Oregon State Legislature passed HB 4023. This bill provided for many changes in how the state would promote broadband infrastructure for all of its citizens moving forward. Shortly after the adjournment of the 2018 session, ODE began implementing this new program designed to help close the digital divide in schools across Oregon. The purpose of the program was to provide funding to those districts with the most need. Districts that had the following characteristics were considered to have the highest need:

- High levels of poverty
- Remote location
- Small student body
- Poor quality internet connection types
- Low internet connection speeds

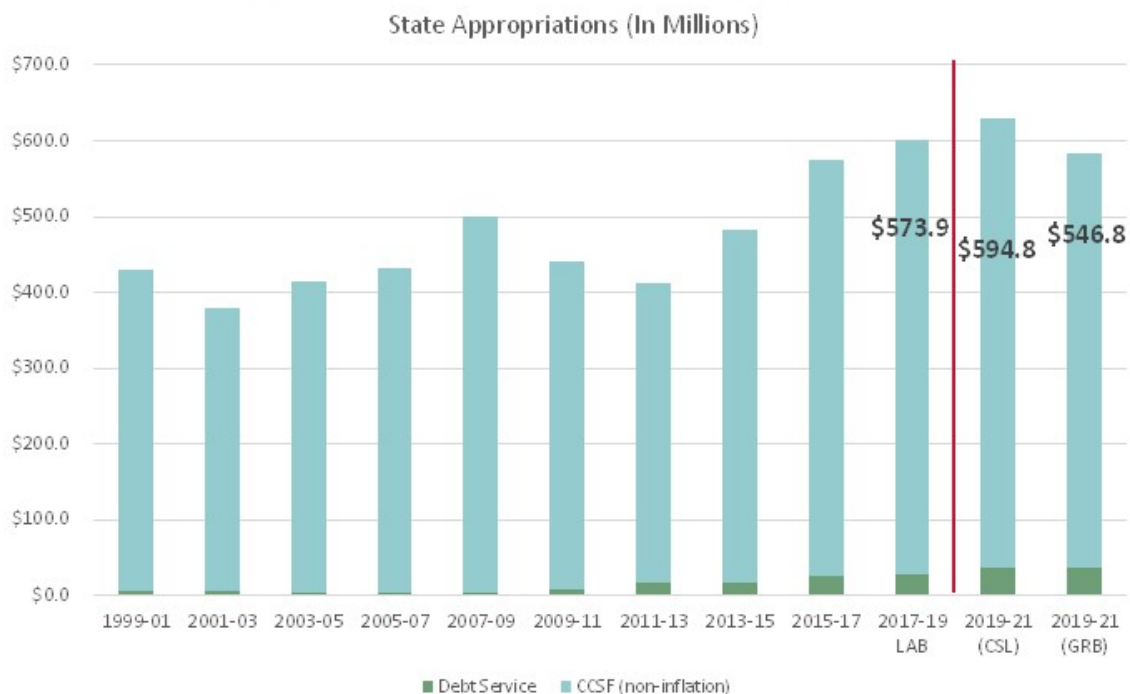
Although five projects were funded, the program was discontinued in 2019. A review of the project can be found in [Connecting Oregon Schools Fund E-Rate Matching Program Report](#). We recommend that funding for this program be restored, or that new investments in broadband infrastructure occur.

**Recommendation #2**—Increased or level funding for local community colleges

A [comprehensive snapshot of Oregon’s 17 community colleges](#) highlights the student populations served 261,482 total students in 2018-19. The lack of resources and funding continue to impact students (32% reporting) who reported that they are unable to meet expenses with existing resources. This reflects what is happening at the national level for community colleges.

Tackling the pressing gaps in postsecondary education outcomes in the United States will require addressing the resource disparity faced by community colleges. Students continue to face increasing costs of living, medical and healthcare expenses, and an inability to move from entry-level wages to move into the middle class. Higher education will continue to end short of a degree for too many students if more is not done to ensure these institutions have the revenue they need to fully support everyone who walks in their doors; whether that means hiring more full-time faculty, expanding advising and tutoring, or helping students with basic needs such as food and housing. Achieving resource equity will require strategies to boost spending on community colleges from the federal, state, and local levels.

## Community College State Funding



204 Source: HECC analysis of state appropriation and student-level data.



## State Appropriations to Community Colleges Per Resident Student (FTE)



**Notes:**

- Includes Debt Service
- Community College data includes only CCSF distributed by funding formula
- Enrollment for 2017-19 assumed at 2015-17 levels
- Inflation adjustment based on HECA

205 Source: HECC analysis of state appropriation and student-level data.



### **Recommendation #3**—Greater investment in apprenticeship as a valuable work-based learning model

More funding is needed to expand registered apprenticeship opportunities and provide Oregonians with living-wage jobs. Registered Apprenticeship is an opportunity to bring families out of poverty with little to no college debt through occupational training that combines paid, on-the-job experience and classroom instruction. More funding can provide for additional staffing at the state level to elevate awareness of apprenticeship as a workforce solution. Additional staffing would allow for more business engagement, which in turn would create more opportunities for Oregonians. In addition, further investments would provide underrepresented populations greater access to apprenticeship opportunities.

## **Conclusion**

Through the dedicated support of the Oregon State Legislature and key business and industry stakeholders, CTE has taken a large step forward in intentionally growing high quality programs and increasing opportunities for students. As the identified state agencies continue to work through the opportunities and successes, the collective wisdom and energy of Oregonians can dramatically impact future educational, workforce, and economic goals. Appreciation is expressed to our supporters who have a vision of achieving greater prosperity for Oregon through investing in our students and connecting them to strong experiences to anchor their secondary and postsecondary success.