# FY26 Innovation Career Pathway Application Guidance

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## Introduction

June 2025

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your district’s interest in developing one or more Innovation Career Pathways!

In 2025-26, all Innovation Career Pathways (ICP), Secondary CTE, Postsecondary CTE, and CTE Partnership applications will be submitted viaDESE’s new online **C**ommunication **H**ub and **A**pplication **M**anagement **P**ortal (**CHAMP**). This document is intended to offer guidance to districts on completing the required Intent to Apply, as well as the Part A and Part B applications. The timeline for designation is on the [DESE ICP webpage](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/pathways/innovation-pathways/default.html).

We look forward to supporting your team throughout the designation process and beyond as you implement and strive for continuous improvement.

In partnership,
The DESE Office for College Career and Technical Education

## CHAMP Overview

### About CHAMP

CHAMP is a new Department-wide platform, designed to foster alignment across DESE offices by having more processes living in the same place. Already launched in several DESE offices, CHAMP will be used for the first time by the Office of College, Career, and Technical Education (CCTE) in FY26. *Important note: In CHAMP the applications can only be saved when there is a response in every criterion. CCTE recommends that applicants use this Guidance document to develop responses for your application(s), then sit down and apply in one session using the prepared responses and with upload documents ready.*

### Accessing CHAMP

The [CHAMP platform](https://dese.my.site.com/portal/s/login/?ec=302&startURL=%2Fportal%2Fs%2F) lives on Salesforce. Users will need their email address and to create a password to log in to their CHAMP account. Once logged in successfully, users will be able to access the Intent to Apply, which will kick off the new program designation process. Superintendents, CTE Directors, and Prospective Applicant Workshop registrants were sent an email from Salesforce to activate their account. If you do not have a CHAMP login, go to [CCTE CHAMP Resources & Requests](https://s.alchemer.com/s3/CCTE-CHAMP-Resources-Requests), and from the landing page click "next," at the bottom, to request access for a new CHAMP account.

### CHAMP Onboarding and Technical Support

Please refer to the "CHAMP for CCTE Guide," accessible via [CCTE CHAMP Resources & Requests](https://s.alchemer.com/s3/CCTE-CHAMP-Resources-Requests), as your initial resource for navigating CHAMP. *Note, This guide will be updated frequently to include new and revised information. You might consider bookmarking the site.* Beginning in June 2025 CCTE will be providing technical assistance opportunities via webinars and [office hours](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/HD_lRIJqQX2_bHyBf6-kRA) to help districts as they familiarize themselves with the new tool. The CCTE team will also post and share asynchronous mini lessons on how to log in to CHAMP, access the Intent to Apply, creating Part A and Part B applications, and more.

## Intent to Apply

### General

The Intent to Apply, *new for ICP in 2025-26*, asks for basic information and is required of applicants for any DESE-designated program. This includes Secondary CTE, Postsecondary CTE, CTE Partnership Programs, and Innovation Career Pathways.

Intents are the first step in the new program designation process and are submitted in CHAMP. Part A and Part B applications are both connected and completed via the Intent. A district is not able to submit a Part A or Part B application without submitting an initial Intent to Apply. CCTE will also use the Intents to identify where districts may need future supports.

An Intent to Apply must be submitted for each pathway being proposed. For example, if your district wishes to apply for two ICP pathways, you will need to submit an Intent to Apply for each.

### Intent Questions

Below are the questions asked in the Intent to Apply. **You must complete your Intent(s) in** [**CHAMP**](https://dese.my.site.com/portal/s/login/?ec=302&startURL=%2Fportal%2Fs%2F)**.**

1. School – *This is the school in which the program will be operating.*
	1. Select from Prepopulated Dropdown List
2. District
	1. Select from Prepopulated Dropdown List
3. Who is the primary contact? [Name, Title]
4. Primary contact phone number
5. Primary contact email address
6. Who is part of the design team? *Developing a new program is not to be a solo endeavor. This is where you include the roles of the individuals and any partners such as businesses, other intermediaries like community-based organizations, that are involved in the planning and design of the proposed pathway.*
	1. [Name, Affiliation, Title] for all individuals at time of submission of the Intent to Apply
7. Designation type
	1. Dropdown List [Secondary Ch.74, Postsecondary Ch. 74, Innovation Career Pathway] *Choose “Innovation Career Pathway.”*
8. Program/Pathway Title
	1. This will be a Prepopulated Dropdown List that includes every possible CTE program as well as every Innovation Career Pathway sector.
9. Is the school district's Intent to Apply associated with a Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) application? [Yes or No]
10. What year do you plan to open the program? *This Intent to Apply should be completed only if you intend to have students enrolled in the program in the subsequent academic year or another year that is connected to MSBA funding.*
11. Assurances for Awareness – *See the Appendix in this document*. *Please print, sign, and upload the form in the Appendix for both “a” and “b.”*
	1. Understanding of requirements and steps for designation process (Preparation & Design)
		1. File Download/Upload.
	2. Understanding of reporting requirements following designation (Implementation & Sustainability)
		1. File Upload including:
			1. Understanding that the program must be designed and funded such that it will be offered free for all student participants—including tuition, fees, and other related expenses (Equitable Access)
			2. Understanding of expectation that the school must register for and participate in the Designing for Equity Workshop (Equitable Access)
			3. Understanding of [My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/sec-design/mycap/default.html) as a required component for designation and agreement to participate in trainings, if new to MyCAP (Preparation & Design)

## Part A - Planning & Design

See the [Innovation Career Pathway Criteria](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/pathways/innovation-pathways/criteria.docx).

A Part A application must be submitted for each proposed ICP pathway. In addition to introductory questions, such as contact information, you will be required to complete the following questions. **Note – This is not the application itself. You will complete the application in** [**CHAMP**](https://dese.my.site.com/portal/s/login/?ec=302&startURL=%2Fportal%2Fs%2F)**.**

### General

1. How does the program address both local and regional needs? For schools with a Perkins Allocation, how does your [Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment](https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/perkins/) inform your decision to apply for this program?
2. How would the pathway fit into the district/school plan/priorities and your school’s strategy for pathways? *Also address the goals you have for the program.* *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
3. How many students will the program serve in the first year of implementation? *Enter numerical value.*
4. If this program is approved/designated, how many additional students have access to pathways in your school? *This question is getting at new seats in programming. Enter numerical value.*
5. How many hours of instruction will students receive over the full course of instruction? *While there is not an hour requirement for ICP, this helps us understand the intended student experience.*
6. Complete and upload the Total Program Hours worksheet. *While there is not an hour requirement for ICP, this helps us understand the intended student experience.*
7. Informing the Design
	1. What are the successes and challenges of your current programs/pathways or coursework? (Instructional and Operational, safety)? How does this inform the design of this program? *This will be an open text field limited to 500 words.*
	2. Or, if first pathway/program, what data are you looking at to inform the design (performance in other courses, student selection, student engagement, etc.) *This will be an open text field limited to 500 words.*

### Effective Partnerships

1. How have you coordinated and collaborated with other schools in the region to understand the regional need and demand for the program? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
2. How have you coordinated and collaborated with your [MassHire workforce board](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/connect-with-your-local-masshire-workforce-board) to understand the regional need and demand for the program? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
3. Chapter 74 and Chapter 74 Partnership “After Dark” applications require the completion of a CTE Program Advisory Committee (PAC) Form (Appendix D in CTE New Program Application Guidance). *While a formal advisory committee is not required for ICP, it is important that individuals representing diverse perspectives and experiences support the development of your program/pathway(s). Describe the role that Employers, Educators, Families, Higher Education, Community Based Organizations, Students, Alumni will play in the development of your pathway/program. The*[*Career Technical Education Advisory Committee Guide*](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/pathways/cte/resources/acguide.docx)*is a quality resource on forming and utilizing Advisory Committees. This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*

### Equitable Access

1. How will the program and the design of the program intentionally work to advance equitable access and outcomes for students, and in particular students from historically underserved groups? What data will you consider? What protocols will you use? NOTE: *The response should reflect school-side/district-wide discussions across departments including special education, EL services, school counseling, academic and non-academic, and others. Consider student voice and community involvement. This will be an open text field limited to 250* *words*.

## Part B – Implementation & Sustainability

See the [Innovation Career Pathway Criteria](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/pathways/innovation-pathways/criteria.docx).

A Part B application must be submitted for each proposed ICP pathway. In addition to introductory questions, such as contact information, you will be required to complete the following questions. **Note – This is not the application itself. You will complete the application in** [**CHAMP**](https://dese.my.site.com/portal/s/login/?ec=302&startURL=%2Fportal%2Fs%2F)**.**

### Effective Partnerships

1. Describe the committee or individuals, including membership/representation, that will provide ongoing guidance in the continuous improvement of your program. Describe the role of Employers, Educators, Families, Higher Education, Community Based Orgs, Students, Alumni. *NOTE: This relates to the Part A question regarding advisory. A best practice is to develop the response with the input of the committee or individuals named*. *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*

### Academic Pathways

1. What are the courses students will be taking that are specific to the pathway? *For ICP, the courses must include two technical and two advanced, as defined for DESE Accountability purposes. Each course must be year-long or equivalent.*
	1. **Upload:** Provide the syllabus and scope and sequence for each course that will be included. Syllabi must include technical and academic standards alignment and assessments.
2. Are the courses named above new or existing? If new, who was involved in the development or selection of the course(s)? Name the individuals and their affiliations. *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
3. How will or has the curriculum for this pathway been developed? How does it align to DESE’s definition of [high quality instructional materials](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/default.html)? *You might consult your district’s curriculum coordinator or CTE director. You might also pull from your district's curriculum policy and/or district improvement plan or Portrait of a High School Graduate. ICP programs are designed to prepare students to meet specific outcomes, such as achievement of industry recognized credentials. How are the courses in the pathway specifically designed to meet the student outcomes? This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
4. Some CTE programs must demonstrate that they meet state or federal licensing requirements. *This is not an ICP application requirement. Please type “Not Applicable for ICP applicants” in the text field.*
5. For programs with industry equipment, what safety procedures will be in place to support safe use?
	1. **Upload:** Provide Safety and Health plan. Health and Safety Plans are available by program for adapting locally on the [Career Connected Learning Hub.](https://macte.ns4ed.com/) *Note: this is a new requirement for ICP, where applicable.*
6. Who will be teaching the courses? What qualifications and licenses will instructors in the program have? *Name the individuals, their affiliations, and specify their qualifications and licenses.*
7. Has the school implemented [MassCore](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/sec-design/masscore/default.html) for all students? *MassCore is a state-recommended program of study intended to align high school coursework with college and workforce expectations*. *MassCore is also in alignment with DESE’s* Educational Vision. “*A” or “B” must include narrative. MassCore completion is required for ICP students.*
	1. If yes, how do these programs align with MassCore completion? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
	2. If no, how will the school implement MassCore for all students at the school? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*

### Enhanced Student Supports

Consistent with DESE’s [Educational Vision](https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2023/2023-05/item7.1-educational-vision.pdf), individualized supports enable students to excel at grade level (or beyond).

1. How will [Universal Design for Learning](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/blueprint.pdf) inform the design of the pathway and instruction in the pathway coursework? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
2. What [culturally and linguistically sustaining strategies](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-sustaining/default.html) will be implemented in instruction of the pathway? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
3. How will student progress and success in the pathway be monitored? How will strategies be implemented in these programs when interventions and supports are necessary? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
4. What supports will students receiving EL services have to access and be successful in the pathway? What [WIDA strategies](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/access/resources.html) will be implemented in instruction of the pathway? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
5. What supports will students receiving IEP services have to access and be successful in the pathway? *This will be an open text field limited to 500 words.*
6. Has the school implemented My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP) for all students at the school?
	1. If yes, what artifacts will document the learning in this pathway? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
	2. If no, how will the school implement MyCAP for all students at the school? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*

### Connections to Career

1. What outcomes will students achieve upon completion? What Industry Recognized Credentials (IRCs) will students have the opportunity to earn while in the program? Industry recognized credentials are identified on the [Career Connected Learning Hub](https://macte.ns4ed.com/).
2. What college credits, articulated credit, and/or advanced placement credit will students have an opportunity to earn? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
3. What challenges do you anticipate in ensuring participation and success of historically underserved students in credentials/ outcomes and how will you address those challenges? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
4. What work-based learning experiences will students have as part of the program? *ICP programs must create an opportunity for students to complete 100 hours of a career immersion experience in either an internship or capstone class, offering structured work readiness activities and work-based learning experiences. This will be an open text field limited to c words.*
5. How will employers be engaged in designing and implementing work-based learning? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
6. Which staff member(s) will be responsible for coordinating work-based learning experiences, including cooperative education. This should address who is supporting the work-based learning plan for each student.
	1. If this is a position that is to be hired, provide a brief job description. *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
7. What is the procedure for students to access Cooperative Education? What forms are utilized? *This is not an ICP application requirement. Please type “Not Applicable for ICP applicants” in the text field.*
8. For programs offering students opportunities to participate in in Offsite Construction and Maintenance Projects, submit the Offsite projects Assurances Signature Form. *This is not an ICP application requirement. Please type “Not Applicable for ICP applicants” in the text field.*
9. What challenges do you anticipate in ensuring participation and success of historically underserved students in work-based learning, and how will you address those challenges? NOTE: *The response should reflect school-side/district-wide discussions across departments including special education, EL services, school counseling, academic and non-academic, and others. Consider student voice and community involvement. This will be an open text*
10. What space and facilities will be used? *This should include the location and description of all classrooms and teaching spaces. This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
	1. Are space and facilities ready? *For spaces and facilities not yet ready, this should include the status and timeline for the space and facilities to be in a state ready to begin instructing students. This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
11. What equipment/supplies will be used? *A list of equipment to teach the Pathway must be included.* *Applicants should see CTE Frameworks on the* [*CCL Hub*](https://macte.ns4ed.com/updated-frameworks/) *for Industry Standard Equipment.*
	1. Is equipment ready? *OCCTE will visit the program and conduct a Safety, Health, and Accessibility Visit once installed. If the equipment is not ready, please include the status and timeline for the equipment to be in place to begin instructing students. This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*

### Equitable Access

1. What experiences will students have in middle school (or sending middle schools) to be aware of this and other pathway and coursework options? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
2. What experiences will students have in 9th grade to explore all pathway and coursework options? *Applicants are encouraged to* [*read about exploratory on the CCL Hub.*](https://macte.ns4ed.com/exploratory/) *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
3. How will students select and enter the program? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
4. Is there an opportunity for students who may not have the traditional transition experience from 8th to 9th grade? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
5. What policies and procedures will you employ if there is more student interest than available seats? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*

### Leadership and Sustainability

1. Which district and school roles will be responsible for program implementation and oversight? *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
2. Comprehensive school districts with 5 or more CTE programs must have a CTE Director. If applicable, provide the CTE Director licensure information. *This is not applicable for ICP applicants. This is not an ICP application requirement. Please type “Not Applicable for ICP applicants” in the text field.*
3. In opening a program, you must consider how it will be supported with LEA funds. *In order to determine the costs of running a program, consult with your district business manager as well as the program director.* *This will be an open text field limited to 250 words.*
	1. What are the anticipated year over year actual costs to run the program?
	2. How will those costs be incorporated into the local budget?
	3. What role will grants play in program start up?
	4. What role will grants play in continued sustainability?

Appendix: Assurances for Awareness

Completion and submisison of this form documents that the applicant is aware of requirements for Innovation Career Pathways (ICP) designation; that the information in the application is factual; and that the district will adhere to the applicable state and federal laws and regulations. *Please print, sign, and provide this form for both “upload” sections in the Intent to Apply in CHAMP.*

Understanding of [requirements and steps](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/pathways/innovation-pathways/default.html) for the designation process in 2025-26. Please check the boxes to confirm awareness.

* In submitting the Intent to Apply via CHAMP, we agree to submit a Part A application.
* The Part A application is due via CHAMP on Thursday, October 30, 2025.
* The Part B application is due via CHAMP on Thursday, February 5, 2026.
* Following DESE staff and leadership review, designations will be conferred by the DESE Commissioner in April 2026.
* We understand the expectation that the school must register for and participate in the Designing for Equity Workshop (Equitable Access).
* Throughout the designation process we commit to actively participating in technical assistance offerings and meeting regularly with our [CCTE Liaison](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/pathways/cte/liaisons.html).
* We understand that My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP) is a required component for designation and agree to participate in trainings, if new to MyCAP (Preparation & Design).

Understanding of ICP funding, sustainability, and DESE reporting requirements for designated programs. Please check the boxes to confirm awareness.

* The program must be designed and funded such that it will be offered free for all student participants—including tuition, fees, and other related expenses (Equitable Access).
* Any DESE funding for ICP must be applied for separarately via a grant application process.
* We agree to comply with annual program reporting requirements, including the submission of data to DESE via SIMS and SCS, and an annual self-reflection.

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|  |  |
| *Printed Name of Superintendent* |  |
|  |  |
| *Signature of Superintendent* | *Date* |
|  |  |
| *Printed Name of Principal* |  |
|  |  |
| *Signature of Principal*  | *Date* |

In signing we attest that the information submitted in this and subsequent applications is factual and that the school district will develop and implement the approved program in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.