

Postsecondary Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA)Guide and Worksheets

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

The federal Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act requires that funding recipients undertake a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) at least every two years. This document serves as a guide to that process. Perkins V recognizes the value and importance of in-depth, continual programmatic self-examination to improve programs and benefit students. Perkins V requires that recipients of Perkins funding undertake a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) at least every two years. Specifically, the law states:

To be eligible to receive financial assistance under this part, an eligible recipient shall—

1. conduct a comprehensive local needs assessment related to career and technical education and include the results of the needs assessment in the local application submitted under subsection (a); and
2. not less than once every 2 years, update such comprehensive local needs assessment.

## Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA)

The Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) helps ensure programs align with local workforce needs and economic priorities, supports equitable service for all learners, and enables better resource allocation to high-skill, high-wage, in-demand occupations that address equity gaps. The CLNA also aids in coordinating program reviews and school improvement efforts and provides a structured approach for ongoing engagement with key stakeholders on the quality and impact of local CTE programs and systems. This document is designed to empower Massachusetts Perkins funding applicants to:

* Develop a needs assessment based on local considerations,
* Use data to identify improvement areas that can best serve students,
* Engage key stakeholders about the quality and impact of local programs,
* Align ongoing improvement efforts (e.g. strategic plans)
* Implement findings into grant proposals and expenditures.

## How to Use this Tool

The CLNA is made up of six parts:

Part 1: Alignment to Labor Market Needs

Part 2: Implementation Programs and Programs of Study

Part 3: Size, Scope, and Quality

Part 4: Equitable Access

Part 5: Performance on Core Indicators

Part 6: Recruitment, Retention, and Training of Faculty and Staff

In each of the six parts of the CLNA, there will be a series of questions that your institution will reflect on to provide responses. To respond to the prompts, you will need to consult all relevant stakeholders and review materials such as promotional/recruitment documents, disaggregated data on participation and performance, focus groups and surveys from students/community members/families, and any relevant institutional policies and resources.

## PART I: Alignment to Labor Market Needs

*How well are your programs aligned with state, regional, and local workforce and career needs? What programming changes might you consider for closer alignment?*

Perkins V emphasizes alignment between local and regional workforce needs and the CTE programs to meet those needs. School districts and postsecondary institutions are expected to make programmatic decisions grounded in the analysis of local and regional needs. Through analysis and regional consultation, applicants can determine whether programs should be expanded, added, or phased out.

### Analysis and Reflection

* Do your current programs align with the identified Labor Market Priorities of your MassHire Blueprint? Are there other sources of labor market demand?
* Does your school offer CTE programs aligned with industries and/or occupations with weak or non-existent demand? If so, what are those programs?
* Does your institution offer (or intend to offer) programs meeting other needs not identified by your local MassHire Board? If yes, on what basis have you determined the need for the programs?
* How is your institution creating and developing CTE programs to meet the needs of growing industries and occupations in alignment with the region’s MassHire Workforce Board Blueprints?
* What skills and/or knowledge gaps, if any, exist in your programs? How are you engaging with industry partners, and other experts in the field to support programmatic review? What connections are being made to NECHE and/or other accreditation body reviews?

### Resources

* [MassHire Workforce Board Regional Workforce Blueprints](https://www.mass.gov/lists/regional-workforce-blueprints) analyze workforce conditions for each of the state’s seven regions and provide listings of priority and critical industries and occupations for each region.
* For linkages and alignment to available secondary programs, DESE’s CCTE [Pathway/Program School Finder Tool](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/search/get_closest_orgs.aspx) provides a visual and tabular listing of High-Quality College and Career Pathways offered in public educational institutions (Grades 9-12) throughout the Commonwealth.
* [Designing Career and Technical Education Programs that Help Students Get Good Jobs](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Designing%20Career%20and%20Technical%20Education%20Programs%20that%20Help%20Students%20Get%20Good%20Jobs_0.pdf)

## PART II: Implementing Programs and Programs of Study

*Have you developed pathways for all students to progress from secondary to postsecondary education and continued education?*

Perkins V distinguishes between “programs,” that exist in a secondary or postsecondary setting, and “programs of study,” which bridge secondary and postsecondary education. Programs of study are career pathways that:

* Incorporate challenging state academic standards;
* Address both academic and technical knowledge and skills, including employability skills;
* Are aligned with the needs of industries statewide, regionally, and/or locally;
* Progress in specificity from consideration of all aspects of an industry or career cluster to more occupation-specific instruction;
* Have multiple entry and exit points that incorporate credentialing; and
* Culminate in the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential.

### Analysis and Reflection

* What Programs of Study are your CTE Programs connected to:
  + What secondary programs are your students likely to enter from?
  + What additional postsecondary programs are available for your students to continue to?
  + What opportunity is there for further alignment between secondary and postsecondary programs? How do you leverage dual enrollment and articulation agreements to strengthen alignment and student continuation towards additional credentials and degrees that increase earning potential in related fields?
* Do all programs have a clear and understandable sequence of courses identified for students to obtain a high value credential?
* How often does your institution review the course sequence and content to ensure alignment with the demands of the job market and field?

### Resources

* MA Career Connected Learning Hub

## PART III: Size, Scope, and Quality

*Are your programs of sufficient size, scope, and quality to meet all your students’ needs? How can you do better?*

Perkins V requires that programs offered by school districts and colleges be “sufficient in size, scope, and quality to meet the needs of all students served.” [134(c)(2)(B)(i).

For a clear explanation of the Perkins V program requirements for size, scope, and quality, see: Size, Scope and Quality document.

### Analysis and Reflection

* Are your programs sustaining a cohort of students that supports a community learning environment?
* Are any of your programs experiencing a downturn or unexpected increase in enrollment? How are you supporting the decrease/increase?
* Is your program’s enrollment and graduation of sufficient size to meet the demand of the region?
* What does the program do to sufficiently prepare students for a high value credential?
* Do all programs address all aspects relevant to an industry: inclusive of occupational safety and health knowledge and skills; technical knowledge and skills; embedded academic knowledge and skills; employability and career readiness knowledge and skills; management and entrepreneurship knowledge and skills; and technological knowledge and skills?
* What types of support(s) does your institution offer for career and life planning for students enrolled in your CTE programs? Are all CTE students using the support(s)?
* How is the institution targeting support(s) for students who may not be using the resources available to them?
* Has the accrediting agency for each program identified any areas for academic/quality improvement? How is your institution addressing that feedback?
* How are students who are not in good academic standing/making satisfactory academic progress in a program being supported to obtain their path’s credential (associate degree and/or IRC?) How many students are not making progress in each program? Please be sure to disaggregate.
* How does your institution incorporate continuous improvement for program quality to support student outcomes? Are student voices a part of the process?
* Do your institution’s graduates report feeling prepared for the workforce? Do your graduates report they are gaining employment in their field upon program completion?

## PART IV: Equitable Access

*Do the policies, practices, and habits of your institution support equitable access to high-quality career and technical education courses and programs of study for all students?*

Perkins V places greater emphasis on issues of equity and access. Specifically, the law requires, in Section 134(c)(2)(E), that each CLNA include –

A description of progress toward implementation of equal access to high-quality career and technical education courses and programs of study for all students, including— (i) strategies to overcome barriers that result in lower rates of access to, or performance gaps in, the courses and programs for special populations; (ii) providing programs that are designed to enable special populations to meet the local levels of performance; and (iii) providing activities to prepare special populations for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations in competitive, integrated settings that will lead to self-sufficiency.

Special populations as defined by Perkins V are: (1) individuals with disabilities; (2) individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth and adults; (3) individuals preparing for non-traditional fields; (4) single parents, including single pregnant women; (5) out-of-workforce individuals; (6) English learners ; (7) homeless individuals; (8) youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system; and (9) youth with a parent who is an active-duty member of the armed forces.

### Analysis and Reflection

* Which demographics (race/ethnicity, gender, and as defined by special populations) are underrepresented and overrepresented in your CTE programs (in comparison to the industry, the overall institutional enrollment, and other relevant areas identified by your advisory committee)?
* What challenges and barriers exist for students applying to and graduating from your institution’s CTE programs?
* What does your institution’s strategic plan indicate for increasing access and support to special populations? How are your CTE programs implementing the strategic plan(s)?
* How does your institution provide academic support to students and make students aware of available support(s)?
* What types of non-academic resources does your institution offer to support special populations? (e.g. wellness center, food pantry, tutoring centers, affinity spaces, accommodations, modifications, etc.)
* Of those resources, which are most utilized and underutilized? How have the resources been effective/ineffective in supporting students?
* How does your institution get feedback regarding the support students need?

### Resources

* [AdvanceCTE: Resource Center](https://careertech.org/resource-center/topics/): Access and Equity, Systems Alignment, Data and Accountability
* [Guide: Using Performance Outcomes to Improve CTE Programs for Students](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/data-reports/default.html) Enrollment Analysis section (page 11)
* [Defining and Assessing Equity in Community Colleges](https://www.workforcegps.org/events/2021/12/16/16/57/Defining-and-Assessing-Equity-in-Community-Colleges)
* [Developing "Equity Sense": Meaning-Making at a Community College](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/00028312231178760?icid=int.sj-abstract.citing-articles.11)
* [Racial & Ethnic Equity Gaps in Postsecondary Career and Technical Education](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/103777/racial-and-ethnic-equity-gaps-in-postsecondary-career-and-technical-education_considerations-for-online-learning_0.pdf)
* [Creating a Space for Student Voice in Advancing Program Review](https://occrl.illinois.edu/docs/librariesprovider2/program-review/creating-a-space-for-student-voice-in-advancing-program-review.pdf?sfvrsn=40b9c1d1_5)
* [Five Principles for Enacting Equity by Design](https://occrl.illinois.edu/docs/librariesprovider2/clna/five-principles-for-enacting-equity-by-design.pdf?sfvrsn=18806976_3)
* [Taking Equity-Minded Action to Close Equity Gaps](https://www.proquest.com/docview/1930761007)

## PART V: Performance on Core Indicators

*How are your students performing? What improvements can you make to ensure you support all students?*

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) asks all applicants to collect, report, and analyze student outcome data to inform program improvements that benefit students. In this section, applicants use core indicators to determine overall progress in achieving targets, progress for subpopulations of students, and progress by specific CTE program.

### Analysis and Reflection

* When looking at all students, which indicator(s) does your school meet/exceed targets, and for which indicator(s) does your school not meet targets? Be sure to disaggregate and look across different populations (e.g. special population, gender, race/ethnicity, program participation, etc.)
* What potential root causes may explain differences in outcomes within and across programs? How is your institution working to address those challenges, and have there been any barriers/challenges in addressing them?
* In what ways are these potential root causes similar across indicators, programs, and/or subpopulations? In what ways are potential root causes specific to indicators, programs, and/or subpopulations?

### Resources

* [Guide: Using Performance Outcomes to Improve CTE Programs for Students](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/data-reports/default.html): Perkins Core Indicator Reports
* [Planning for Success Root Cause Analysis](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/default.html)
* [The Five Whys tool](https://www.cms.gov/medicare/provider-enrollment-and-certification/qapi/downloads/fivewhys.pdf)
* [Making Good on the Promise: Examining Access and Achievement Gaps](https://careertech.org/resource/examining-access-achievement-gaps)

## PART VI: Recruitment, Retention, and Training of Faculty and Staff

*How can you improve our educational staff’s recruitment, retention, and training, including those in underrepresented groups?*

Perkins V places new emphasis on CTE Program staff. Specifically, the law requires, in Section 134(c)(2)(D), that each CLNA include –

A description of how the eligible recipient will improve recruitment, retention, and training of career and technical education teachers, faculty, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and career guidance and academic counselors, including individuals in groups underrepresented in such professions.

### Analysis and Reflection

* How has your institution engaged employers in the recruitment of CTE faculty?
* What percentage of educators reflect the demographic makeup of the community? How will you ensure sustained representation and/or continued progress toward this goal?
* Are any of your CTE programs short on educators? How is your institution supporting targeted recruitment for those programs?
* What types of professional development opportunities are your CTE educators asking for to support instruction? Are there any barriers to providing those opportunities?
* How is your institution ensuring that culturally responsive teaching is being integrated into the classroom and that leadership is also culturally responsive?

## Putting It All Together – the Findings

The Perkins Application calls for information on all strategic initiatives. Using the worksheet, organize the collected information in preparation for the application.

Consider –

* Which items are most concerning?
* Which observations warrant further digging?
* What additional questions does your analysis raise?
* What are the possible underlying root causes?
* What are the next possible steps for each program analyzed, or what actions could you take based on the findings?
* Who else might you invite to participate in this process, to help you better understand and synthesize needs and consider possible solutions?

***Your annual Perkins Application must demonstrate how the expenditures are aligned with your findings from your institution’s CLNA.***

## Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment Worksheet

These questions must be answered first to begin your Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment.

1. What CTE Programs are offered by my institution:
2. What data source(s) is our institution using? Are they both quantitative and qualitative?
3. What are the priority labor market needs for the state and region, including in the MassHire Regional Blueprint?
4. What stakeholder groups and advisories provide feedback on my institution’s CTE Programs?
5. What additional groups need to be consulted to ensure all Perkins identified groups provide feedback about my institution’s CTE program offerings? Perkins Identifies these groups:
   1. Secondary School Leaders and Teachers
   2. Career and academic counselors
   3. CTE/Perkins Administrators
   4. Community partners and members
   5. Post-secondary CTE faculty and administrators
   6. Representatives of state or local workforce development boards
   7. Representatives from local and/or regional businesses and industries
   8. Post-secondary non-CTE faculty and administrators
   9. Students
   10. Representatives of agencies serving out-of-school
   11. Homeless and at-risk youth
   12. Representatives of special populations, and
   13. Representatives of Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations, where applicable.

For each section, call on feedback from your institution level data, program level data, and stakeholders as identified above disaggregated by student groups, to evaluate your institution’s overall program offerings and the quality of programs to identify successes that can be expanded upon and opportunities for growth and improvement.

### Definitions:

* **Identified Needs –** Through each analysis, what area(s) need attention at the institution based on the responses and data?
* **Data Used –** Any data used at the institutional level to answer the question (be sure to identify the source)
* **Potential Root Causes –** The underlying cause of the problem(s) of practice which are emerging from your data
* **Potential Actions –** The approaches being suggested or taken to address root causes and problem(s) of practice through action and decision
* **Priority –** Has the institution identified this as an area in which a campus-wide approach is being taken to resolve the problem(s) of practice?

### Part I: Labor Market Alignment. How well are your programs aligned with state, regional, and local workforce and career needs?

* Do your current programs align with the identified Labor Market Priorities of your MassHire Blueprint? Are there other sources of labor market demand?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* Does your school offer CTE programs aligned with industries and/or occupations with weak or non-existent demand? If so, what are those programs?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* Does your institution offer (or intend to offer) programs meeting other needs not identified by your local MassHire Board? If yes, on what basis have you determined the need for the programs?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* How is your institution creating and developing CTE programs to meet the needs of growing industries and occupations in alignment with the region’s MassHire Workforce Board Blueprints?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* What skills and/or knowledge gaps, if any, exist in your programs? How are you engaging with industry partners, and other experts in the field to support programmatic review? What connections are being made to NECHE and/or other accreditation body reviews?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?

### Part II: Programs and Programs of Study. Have you developed pathways for all students to progress from secondary to postsecondary and continued education?

* What Programs of Study are your CTE Programs connected to:
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* What secondary programs are your students likely to enter from?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* What additional postsecondary programs are available for your students to continue on to?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* What opportunity is there for further alignment? How do you leverage dual enrollment and articulation agreements to strengthen alignment and student continuation towards additional credentials and degrees that increase earning potential in related fields?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* Do all programs have a clear and understandable sequence of courses identified for students to obtain an Associate Degree and/or Industry Recognized Credential?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* How often does your institution review the course sequence and content to ensure alignment with the demands of the job market and field?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?

### Part III: Size, Scope, and Quality. Are your programs of sufficient size, scope, and quality to meet all our students’ needs? How can you do better?

* Are your programs sustaining a cohort of students that supports a community learning environment?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* Are any of your programs experiencing a downturn or unexpected increase in enrollment? How are you supporting the decrease/increase?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* Are you graduating enough students to impact the regional demand for the field? What does the impact look like?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* What does the program sufficiently prepare students for a high value credential?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* Do all programs address all aspects relevant to an industry: inclusive of occupational safety and health knowledge and skills; technical knowledge and skills; embedded academic knowledge and skills; employability and career readiness knowledge and skills; management and entrepreneurship knowledge and skills; and technological knowledge and skills?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* What types of support does your institution offer for career and life planning for students enrolled in our CTE programs? Are all CTE students using these supports? How is the institution targeting supports for students who may not be using the resources available to them?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* Has the accrediting agency for each program identified any areas for academic/quality improvement? How is the institution addressing that feedback?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* How are students who are not in good academic standing/making satisfactory academic progress in a program being supported to obtain their path’s credential (associate degree and/or IRC?) How many students are not making progress in each program? Please be sure to disaggregate.
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* How does your institution incorporate continuous improvement for program quality to support student outcomes? Are student voices a part of the process?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* Do your institution’s graduates report feeling prepared and gaining employment upon program completion?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?

### Part IV: Equitable Access. Do the policies, practices, and habits of the institution support equitable access to high-quality career and technical education courses and programs of study for all students?

* Which demographics (race/ethnicity, gender, and as defined by special populations) are underrepresented and overrepresented in your CTE programs?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* What challenges and barriers exist for students applying to and graduating from your institution’s CTE programs?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* What does your institution’s strategic plan indicate for increasing access and support to special populations? How are your CTE programs implementing the strategic plan(s)?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* How does your institution provide academic support to students and make students aware of available supports?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* What types of non-academic resources does your institution offer to support special populations? (e.g. wellness center, food pantry, tutoring centers, affinity spaces, accommodations, modifications, etc.)
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* Of those resources, which are most utilized and underutilized? How have they been effective/ineffective in supporting students?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* How does your institution get feedback regarding the support students need?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?

### PART V: Performance on Core Indicators. How are your students performing? What improvements can you make to ensure you support all students?

* When looking at all students, for which indicator(s) does your school meet/exceed targets, and for which indicator(s) does your school not meet targets? Be sure to disaggregate and look across different populations (e.g. special population, gender, race/ethnicity, program participation)
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* What potential root causes may explain differences in outcomes within and across programs? How is your institution working to address those challenges, and have there been any barriers/challenges in addressing them?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* In what ways are these potential root causes similar across indicators, programs, and/or subpopulations? In what ways are potential root causes specific to indicators, programs, and/or subpopulations?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?

### Part VI: Recruitment, Retention, and Training of Faculty and Staff. How can you improve your educational staff’s recruitment, retention, and training, including those in underrepresented groups?

* How has your institution engaged employers in the recruitment of CTE faculty?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* What percentage of educators reflect the demographic makeup of the community? How will you ensure sustained representation and/or continued progress toward this goal?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* Are any of your CTE programs in short on educators? How is your institution supporting targeted recruitment for those programs?
* What types of professional development opportunities are your CTE educators asking for to support instruction? Are there any barriers to providing those opportunities?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?
* How is your institution ensuring that culturally responsive teaching is being integrated into the classroom and that leadership is also culturally responsive?
  + Identified Needs
  + Data Used
  + Potential Root Causes
  + Potential Actions
  + Priority?

List the **Prioritized Needs** and note the **Root Cause(s)** where these are understood. Identify **Strategies/Activities** to address these in the short-term and/or long-term. Include **monitoring** plans and a vision for **success**. Identify an **Initiative Keyword or Short Title** for this work. Duplicate this process for each **Prioritized Need**.

* Priority Number ID (# or short title)
* Prioritized Needs
* Root Causes
* Strategies/Activities
* Short- or Long-term Strategy? (S, L)\*
* What data will be used to monitor progress? What constitutes success?

Using the analysis above, identify strategic initiatives. Funding in your Perkins application should connect back to the findings and initiatives identified here.