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# Technical Assistance for Advancing Equity in Career and Technical Education

## THE CHALLENGE

Career and technical education (CTE) is an opportunity for advancing students' college and career readiness, yet some students experience barriers to CTE access, participation, and completion. Stereotypes about certain occupational fields may lead some students to select or be placed in CTE programs based on perceptions of their demographic characteristics. For example, a study in one state found that female students enrolled in CTE were substantially underrepresented in STEM CTE programs, but overrepresented in Human Services and Education and Training CTE programs.<sup>1</sup> Nationally, male students predominate in CTE programs that lead to many high-skill, high-wage jobs, while female students make up the majority in the lower-wage, lower-skill areas.<sup>2</sup> In addition, students with disabilities are less likely to participate in CTE in STEM fields, but research has found that such students who took applied STEM courses experienced lowered chances of dropout, increased math test scores, and increased enrollment in postsecondary education.<sup>3</sup>

## OUR RESPONSE

Advancing Equity in CTE, an investment by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE), aimed to build the capacity of CTE professionals to address equity barriers in CTE program enrollment, participation, and completion. The two-year project identified equity challenges as well as examples of effective equity improvement practices through interviews with state, local, and classroom CTE leaders and dialogue with a technical working group. Those efforts contributed to the development of an Equity Toolkit, which provides technical assistance and professional development resources to support state leaders and education providers in promoting accessible and inclusive learning environments that meet the unique needs of all CTE learners.

Technical Assistance for Advancing Equity in CTE builds on the prior project in continuing to support CTE stakeholders in increasing equity. This project provides technical assistance opportunities through a new virtual Advancing Equity in CTE Community of Practice (CoP), housed on the U.S. Department of Education's Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) platform; an in-person National Advancing Equity in Adult, Community College, Career and Technical Education Symposium; and continues dissemination of the Equity Toolkit.

## TOOLS AND RESOURCES

For more information, please visit the Perkins Collaborative Resource Network at <https://cte.ed.gov>.

<sup>1</sup> Hamilton, A. F., Malin, J., & Hackman, D. (2015). Racial/Ethnic and Gender Equity Patterns in Illinois High School Career and Technical Education Coursework. *Journal of Career and Technical Education*, 30(1).

<sup>2</sup> National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education. (2012). Title IX at 40: Working to Ensure Gender Equity in Education. Washington D.C.: Author.

<sup>3</sup> Plasman, J.S., & Gottfried, M.A. (2016, October). Applied STEM Coursework, High School Dropout Rates, and Students with Learning Disabilities. *Educational Policy*. Sage Publications.

