



Perkins V Reserve Grant

FY26 Application Guide

Tennessee Department of Education | February 2025



Overview

The *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*, otherwise known as Perkins V, was signed into law on July 31, 2018. This bipartisan measure reauthorized the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006* and provides nearly \$1.3 billion in annual Federal funding to support Career and Technical Education (CTE) for our nation's youth and adults. In Tennessee, 85 percent of the funds made available through this Act will be awarded to local education agencies (LEAs) and postsecondary institutions as Local Funds. Of these Local Funds, 15 percent will be awarded through a competitive grant process known as the Perkins Reserve Grant.

Purpose

This document provides detailed information regarding how the Tennessee Department of Education (department) and Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) will annually award Perkins Reserve funds, pursuant to Section 112(c) of Perkins V and the priorities outlined in the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education in Tennessee Four-Year State Plan*. Applicants should use the information in this document to develop a robust and thoughtful proposal prior to applying for the Perkins V Reserve Grant (PRG). ***PLEASE NOTE: This guide was prepared for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Applicants and awardees are responsible for compliance and monitoring of the grant award in accordance with the Grant assurances and applicable state and federal law. Please contact your board attorney for specific legal guidance.**

The purpose of the secondary PRG opportunity is to:

1. promote the development and implementation of an **individualized advising** process for all students in support of the High School and Beyond plan to assist in the creation of a bespoke educational plan for each student based on personal goals;
2. Integrate opportunities for students to experience **seamless transitions** between middle school, high school, and postsecondary placements (including the military) through career exploration, advanced math and science in the CTE classroom, and increased early postsecondary opportunities;
3. increase opportunities for learners to earn meaningful **industry credentials of value** needed to meet workforce demands; and
4. increase opportunities for learners to participate in high-quality **WBL experiences** to assist students in streamlining their educational and postsecondary goals.

The PRG opportunity is designed to serve LEAs and postsecondary institutions:

1. **in rural areas:** based on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Locale Code eligibility requirements for Title VI of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Rural Education Initiative (Locale Code 6, 7 or 8); or
2. **with high percentages of CTE concentrators or CTE participants:** 25 percent or more of the total student population are identified as a CTE concentrators or a CTE participant; or
3. **with high numbers of CTE concentrators or CTE participants:** 200 or more identified CTE concentrators or CTE participants; or
4. **with disparities or gaps in performance among students:** as described in Section 113(b) (3)(C)(ii)(II) of Perkins V.

In Tennessee, the PRG opportunity will leverage funding to support CTE programs, practices, and strategies that prepare individuals from traditionally underrepresented student groups, including those individuals who are economically disadvantaged, and those geographic areas that are identified as economically **distressed** or **at-risk**, for high-skill, high-wage, and/or in-demand occupations.

Strengthening CTE through Four Pillars

Individualized Advising

Under Commissioner Lizzette Reynold's leadership, the department's four pillars plan includes individualized advising in support of the High School and Beyond plan, which is required by State Board of Education Rule 0520-01-03-.03(11). Applications focusing on this priority area may choose to implement strategies and/or projects to provide career advising opportunities. Examples include:

1. Increase professional development opportunities for teachers, counselors, and career coaches to ensure awareness of local workforce needs, military careers, and specialized training experiences available to students, such as internships, apprenticeships, and certificate programs.
2. Provide after-hours stipends for teachers to advise parents and students of program of study choices; industry credentials, early postsecondary opportunities, and work-based learning (WBL) experiences; and other opportunities within the school.
3. Increase student and parent awareness of high school opportunities such as programs of study, WBL placements, early postsecondary opportunities, and industry credential offerings through open house program fairs, digital materials, and/or program showcases at school sporting or extracurricular events that have significant parent attendance.

Seamless Transitions

This pillar focuses on the transition of students from middle school to high school, and high school to postsecondary opportunities. Applications focusing on this priority area may choose to implement strategies and/or projects to address access for students in early and middle grades (5-8) to participate in CTE, and for students in grades 9-12 to access early postsecondary opportunities. Examples include:

1. Adding career exploration courses for the middle grades.
2. Increasing opportunities for learners to participate in career exploration activities, including purposeful field trips, access to networking opportunities, and career-based projects.
3. Providing educational services, including equipment and transportation, to ensure students can participate in career exploration activities, both on and off campus.
4. Providing opportunities for students to participate in on- or off-campus dual enrollment courses.
5. Providing opportunities for students to learn CTE content after school and/or during the summer months.
6. Developing problem-based learning opportunities with the use of the Engineering Design Process (EDP) and advanced science and math concepts.
7. Offering career exploration events that involve parents, such as field trips or skills development, as a family night experience.
8. Offering skill-development experiences in partnership with a local Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT), community college, or university, including events for nontraditional students.
9. Offering classroom mentorship experiences with local business and industry partners.

10. Offering middle school STEM-based competitions relating to existing math and science courses.
11. Developing collaborative project-based learning experiences with industry partners.
12. Addressing special populations gaps identified in Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA):
 - a. Providing equipment for students in special populations to meet learning needs.
 - b. Providing tutoring for students in special populations in CTE programs.
 - c. Providing instructional supplies and materials for nontraditional students or students with disabilities.
13. Offering any other alignment strategies that eliminate barriers and prepare individuals from traditionally underrepresented groups in CTE pathways aligned to regional high-skill, high-wage, and/or in-demand career pathways identified through the CLNA.
14. Providing professional development opportunities focused on reducing barriers to student access to CTE, such as training in teaching strategies that help educators find ways to connect CTE instruction to students' existing knowledge and community context.

Alignment to Industry Credentials

Alignment to Industry Credentials is a pillar in Commissioner Reynolds' plan to expand opportunities for all students to earn credentials of value in secondary and postsecondary, which prepare students for high-wage, in-demand, high-skill, and/or emerging occupations, including purposeful opportunities for special populations.

Applications focusing on this priority area may choose to implement strategies such as:

1. Purchase vouchers to allow students to take an industry credential assessment at no cost.
2. Increase opportunities for students to interact with industry-specific equipment and tools to increase their understanding of material assessed on credentialing exams.
3. Provide study materials for students to utilize in their pursuit of credentials.

Work-Based Learning

The fourth priority area of the Four Pillars plan is to expand WBL opportunities for all students to allow students to experience the work environment in their potential careers.

Applications focusing on this priority area may choose to implement strategies and/or projects to provide WBL opportunities, including students in special populations. Examples include:

1. Increasing opportunities for learners to participate in high-quality WBL experiences through the following examples:
 - a. Supporting after-school and/or summer student internships and apprenticeships.
 - b. Supporting implementation of Tennessee's Workforce Development System, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.), and other laws and initiatives that provide students with transition-to-work related services, including strategies from the Individuals with Disabilities Act, in CTE pathways aligned to regional high-skill, high-wage, and/or in-demand career pathways identified through the CLNA. It could also be an innovative practice with partnerships.

2. Developing a school-based enterprise to offer an on-campus WBL experience for students, including those with special needs and/or with transportation issues.
3. Purchasing equipment to train students on specific skill sets requested by a local industry partner.

Important Application, Eligibility, and Award Information

Application Types

1. **Secondary:** This application is open to any Tennessee LEA serving students in grades 5-12 and meeting the Perkins V eligibility requirements.
2. **Postsecondary:** This application is open to any Tennessee postsecondary institution in the Tennessee Board of Regents system and meets the Perkins V eligibility requirements.

Note: Interested LEAs are to submit one (1) comprehensive application in ePlan. This comprehensive application may outline up to three (3) separate secondary projects, but the **LEA award will be capped at \$50,000**. Submission of an application does not guarantee funding, and an applicant could be fully, partially, or not funded for any or all submitted applications. Awarded applications are only permitted to expend funds on allowable uses of funds as outlined in Section 134 of Perkins V and department or TBR guidance.

Important Dates & Deadlines

Please note that all application requirements must be submitted by the following stated deadlines for the application to be evaluated and considered for funding.

Notice of Intent to Apply

- **Thurs., Feb 3, 2025:** [Notice of Intent to Apply](#) became available.
- **Fri., March 21, 2025:** [Notice of Intent to Apply](#) is due no later than 11:59 p.m. CT.

Funding Application

- **Tues., April 1, 2025:** Grant applications are available in ePlan.
- **Fri., May 9, 2025:** Grant applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. CT.

Award Notification

- **Mon., June 30, 2025:** Grant application decision letters are released.

Period of Availability + Reimbursement

- **Tues., July 1, 2025– Tues., June 30, 2026:** Period of funding availability unless otherwise noted in the Grant Award Notification.
- **Wed., Sept. 30, 2026:** All reimbursement requests must be submitted unless otherwise noted in the Grant Award Notification.

Note: The department and TBR reserve the right to consult with recipients to make amendments to

planned uses of funds to ensure allowability and/or refuse any reimbursement request from an awarded applicant for unapproved or unallowable expenditures.

Application, Award, and Accountability Information

Please see below for additional important application, eligibility, and award information.

Application Type	Secondary Application (One LEA)	Postsecondary Application Note: Please contact Michael.Tinsley@TBR.edu for the TBR application.
Application Requirements	• Notice of Intent to Apply • Application • Budget • Letters of specific support • Memorandum of Understanding from any identified partners	• Notice of Intent to Apply • Application • Budget • Letters of specific support • Memorandum of Understanding from all consortium members
Application Submission	Submit in ePlan	TBR
Type of Award	Discretionary	
Disbursement of Funds	Reimbursement, LEA	Reimbursement, Institution
Total Funds Available	TBD	TBD
Maximum Funds Awarded per eligible recipient	\$50,000	\$50,000
Estimated Awards	TBD	TBD
Matching	Not required but encouraged.	
Period of Availability	12 months, July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026	
Reporting and Accounting	Quarterly Progress Report and Final Impact and Expenditure Report	

Contact Information

For additional information regarding the PRG, please contact:

Secondary applications:

Candi Collier
Tennessee Department of Education
Candi.Collier@tn.gov

Postsecondary applications:

Michael Tinsley
Tennessee Board of Regents
Michael.Tinsley@tbr.edu

Appendix A: Comprehensive Perkins Reserve Grant Application

The Secondary application has been streamlined into a single comprehensive PRG application submission in ePlan. Applicants should identify and differentiate between multiple Secondary projects, if applicable when responding to the following sections of the comprehensive application in ePlan. Applicants must complete all sections of the comprehensive application and submit in ePlan by the stated deadlines:

Budget

Provide a detailed budget for the proposed project(s). There are no minimum or maximum budget amounts for PRG funds. Please refer to the Expenditure and Local Implementation Guide and the Perkins V Expenditure Guide for additional budgetary guidance.

Eligibility

Provide information to determine PRG eligibility, including:

1. Selection of Secondary Application:
 - Certification that the applicant meets the Perkins V eligibility requirements to apply.
2. Selection of Applicant Status:
 - **in rural areas:** based on the NCES Locale Code eligibility requirements for Title VI of ESEA, Rural Education Initiative (Locale Code 6, 7 or 8); or
 - **with high percentages of CTE concentrators or CTE participants:** 25 percent or more of the total student population are identified as a CTE concentrator or a CTE participant; or
 - **with high numbers of CTE concentrators or CTE participants:** two hundred or more identified CTE concentrators or CTE participants; or
 - **with disparities or gaps in performance among students:** as described in Section 113(b) (3)(C)(ii)(II) of Perkins V.
3. Project Coordinator or District Contact Information
4. Acknowledgement of [Assurances and Conditions](#)

Project Details

Provide a thorough overview of the proposed project. This should include the following essential components:

1. **Theory of Action** | How will district and educator actions lead to improved student outcomes related to the purposes of the Perkins Reserve Grant? The purpose of Perkins Reserve Grant funding is to:
 - a. promote the development and implementation of an **individualized advising** process for all students in support of the High School and Beyond plan to assist in the creation of a bespoke educational plan for each student based on personal goals;

- b. increase opportunities for learners to earn meaningful **industry credentials of value** needed to meet workforce demands;
 - c. increase opportunities for learners to participate in high-quality **WBL experiences** to assist students in streamlining their educational and postsecondary goals; and
 - d. integrate opportunities for students to experience **seamless transitions** between middle school, high school, and postsecondary placements (including the military) through career exploration, advanced math and science in the CTE classroom, and increased early postsecondary opportunities.
- 2. **Action Step, Outcome, Evaluation Strategy** | Detail key action steps to be taken to achieve the theory of action. For each action step, you will also identify:
 - a. timeline for action step activity;
 - b. alignment to Commissioner Reynolds' Four Pillars;
 - c. identification of innovative practice area(s) to be deployed; and
 - d. partnerships to leverage. *NOTE:* Action steps should be ordered by the highest to lowest priority level. This will be used to determine partial funding awards as needed.
- 3. **Budget narrative** that outlines key priorities for spending. Please also include any in-kind or matching funding.

Partnerships

For applications aligned to the practice of partnership, applicants should provide letter(s) of support and/or Memorandum(s) of Understanding (MOUs) outlining key partnership(s) and the specific roles and actions/tasks of the partnership (including financial or in-kind contributions). These should align to the action steps within the funding applications that identified support from partners.

This supporting document will be uploaded in the "Related Documents" section of ePlan. Secondary applications that identify Partnerships as an innovative practice submitted without this supporting documentation will not be evaluated for funding.

Economic Status Acknowledgement

Each year, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) prepares an index of county economic status for every county in the United States. Economic status designations are identified through a composite measure of each county's three-year average unemployment rate, per capita market income, and poverty rate. Based on these indicators, each county is then categorized as distressed, at-risk, transitional, competitive, or attainment.

Proposals that serve counties designated as **distressed** or **at-risk** will automatically receive additional points in the scoring rubric. Points will be awarded based on the county's economic status designation for fiscal year 2025. You may view the Transparent Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development County Economic Status Map [here](#).

1. Indicate and acknowledge the economic status of the county(ies) for which the project will directly impact.