

Stakeholders and Perkins V: Meaningful Engagement for Student Success

February 2019



THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, Bureau of Indian Education, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

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We are grateful to our partners at **Penn Hill Group** for their help in developing this guide:

This publication is a customization of the ***Let's Get This Conversation Started: Strategies, Tools, Examples and Resources to Help States Engage with Stakeholders to Develop and Implement their ESSA Plans*** publication. The original *Let's Get This Conversation Started* publication was developed in 2016 by CCSSO and Education First, in consultation with national advocacy and civil rights groups. This new, customized publication builds on the same best-practice guidance states used under ESSA to demonstrate how states can foster meaningful, authentic stakeholder engagement for Perkins V.



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Stakeholders and Perkins V: Meaningful Engagement for Student Success

Overview

In July 2018, the Congress passed and President Trump signed into law the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (PL 115-224), a measure to reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (the Perkins Act). The reauthorized statute, known as “Perkins V,” gives states added flexibility in administering their career and technical education (CTE) programs; promotes innovative practices in CTE; and calls for extensive collaboration among state- and local-level secondary, postsecondary, business, and other partners in the development and implementation of high-quality CTE programs that prepare students to gain employment in high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand occupations that meet state and local workforce needs.

Perkins V, the first reauthorization of the Federal CTE statute in more than a decade, thus offers states a new opportunity to rethink and redefine their CTE programs, in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders. In particular, state education agencies (SEAs), other state agencies that administer CTE programs, and their partners can take a serious look at whether their current CTE programs are effective, at whether they are preparing students for the jobs that are available in the state (and will be available in the coming years), and at what level of performance the state should require from CTE programs administered by local educational agencies (LEAs), community colleges, and other providers. Perkins V will go into effect in school year 2019-2020. In the meantime, in the winter and spring of 2019, states will develop either a five-year state plan or a one-year transitional plan, with the latter to be followed up with four-year plan a year later. (Under either option, the state will need to submit certain additional or revised information in 2020 and in subsequent years.) The law calls for extensive stakeholder involvement in the development and implementation of states’ plans.

- First, states must hold public hearings, after appropriate and sufficient notice, that give all segments of the public, and interested organizations and groups the opportunity to present their views and make recommendations on the plan. The state must include those recommendations, and its responses to them, in the actual plan.
- Second, the law requires that the state develop its plan in consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders, such as representatives of secondary and postsecondary CTE, community organizations, representatives of special populations, and the business community.
- Third, the state must consult with a wide range of stakeholders in developing its “state-determined levels of performance,” the specific performance levels, under each of the state’s performance measures, that local recipients of Perkins funds will be expected to meet. Further, at least 60 days before submitting its plan to the U.S. Department of Education (USED), the state must provide those stakeholders the opportunity to comment on those levels of performance, and the state plan must include a written response to those comments in its plan.

- Fourth, the state must make its draft plan publicly available (by electronic means and in an easily accessible format) at least 30 days prior to submission to USED and must take into account public comments generated through that process in its final plan.
- Additional provisions of the Act call for continued stakeholder consultation in ongoing implementation of the plan.

Funding for these engagement activities is available through the Perkins set-aside for state administration; under the statute states may reserve up to 5 percent of their total allocations (or \$250,000, whichever is greater) to carry out state administration, including for development of the state plan.

(See chart on pages 28–29 for a full listing of which stakeholders must be involved in which elements of state plan development and implementation. Other potential stakeholders who might be engaged, in addition to those required by statute, include administrators of CTE student organizations and employers who focus on the employment of economically disadvantaged individuals.)

The Perkins V planning and implementation process is thus an important opportunity for SEAs not only to connect with current education advocates, but to seek out those who feel disconnected or who have not been historically engaged in a public education dialogue.

SEAs should not engage stakeholders simply out of compliance, structure discussions as a one-way conversation, or seek input long after it can be used to inform decision-making. That approach leaves stakeholders feeling like their time has been wasted and less likely to seek out engagement opportunities in the future. Perkins V creates an opportunity for stakeholders to play a more active role in the creation of state policy and for SEAs to build new relationships they can continue through implementation, evaluation and into the launch of new initiatives. States can use Perkins V stakeholder engagement strategies to get communities excited about statewide CTE plans and committed to continuous collaboration with state and local leaders to improve student outcomes.

Moreover, states will want to engage with stakeholders both early (so that stakeholder input has a real impact on plan development) and throughout the process of implementing and carrying out CTE programs under Perkins V (so that program modifications reflect the needs and experiences of stakeholders and so that stakeholders kept abreast of changing policies and practices in the state). This engagement will also help ensure that public officials are held accountable to the public and that there is widespread buy-in for the actions taken to improve CTE programs.

All states have recently gone through the process of developing and submitting their consolidated state plans under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). State agencies will likely want to use lessons learned from, and build on, their ESSA plan experiences regarding consultation with and involvement of stakeholders. Connections and relationships with stakeholders, developed under ESSA, can be sustained and strengthened during the Perkins process. Furthermore, additional stakeholders will need to be involved, giving states an opportunity to further expand their community conversations. For example, consultation with community colleges and other postsecondary providers was not required under ESSA; because CTE is both a secondary and postsecondary endeavor, it is essential (and required) under Perkins to engage with these groups. In addition, the involvement of the business community (including representatives of small business), of labor organizations, and of the state’s workforce development board will be imperative if the state is to ensure that its CTE programs reflect current and emerging

workforce needs and deliver maximum benefit to students. In sum, states must expand the stakeholder involvement procedures and relationships that they developed under ESSA to create new relationships and additional methods of involvement.

CCSSO recognizes that, in a handful of states, the CTE program is not administered by the state education agency (SEA) but is under the purview of another state agency. Our hope is that this guide will be helpful not only to SEAs but to the other State agencies administering the Perkins program and that it will help to strengthen the relationships between SEAs and those other agencies.

State agencies committed to making the most of this engagement opportunity should first reflect on how they *currently* work with stakeholders. The goals of Perkins V engagement should be for stakeholders to leave feeling heard, informed and aware of how they can stay involved and for stakeholder input to have a real impact on a state's Perkins plan, and subsequently its CTE programs—is that what is happening now? State agencies should consider who they connect with regularly, who those stakeholders represent, and how their input is used, as well as who has not been historically engaged in a public education dialogue. This is no easy task, especially in already stretched-thin agencies. This resource is meant to provide State agencies with detailed guidance on how best to plan for, launch and carry out this effort with a wide range of stakeholders.

This guide contains specific strategies on how best to connect with, speak to and learn from stakeholders with a unique perspective. This tool builds on CCSSO's publication [*Let's Get This Conversation Started: Strategies, Tools, Examples and Resources to Help States Engage with Stakeholders to Develop and Implement their ESSA Plans*](#) and provides:

- Detailed guidance on stakeholder engagement strategies;
- State examples of potential strategies;
- Stakeholder-specific tactics;
- Planning templates and tools;
- A breakdown of stakeholders with whom states are required to engage under different provisions of Perkins V; and
- Lists of additional stakeholder engagement resources.

Stakeholder Engagement Checklist

This guide contains a detailed roadmap for engaging with a range of different stakeholder groups. Use this checklist as a reminder for key elements to incorporate into your work, to assess your current engagement approach, and to document your evidence.

	Engagement Strategy	Strategy Checklist	Evidence	✓
Part I: Getting Started	1. Clarify your goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you used your state’s vision for career readiness for all students and for CTE to drive your approach to stakeholder engagement? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do stakeholders know why they are being engaged? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are the key communities you want to reach? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you shared your broad policy views with stakeholders in advance so they can come prepared? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you identified a member of the SEA staff (or, as applicable, staff from another state agency) to oversee the state’s engagement efforts? What may be the impact of that individual coming from a communications background, v. a CTE programing background? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you built an internal system to ensure that input is reviewed and that decision makers know what input is received? 		
	2. Work with partner organizations to identify and engage with your stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you considered expanding the stakeholder engagement structures in place from the Every Student Succeeds Act to facilitate Perkins outreach? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you reached out to diverse partner organizations, community leaders and the legislature to discuss how they can help? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you compared who is required to be at the table under Perkins V against who has and has not been actively engaged in the past? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you leveraged national and state organizations to reach out to new stakeholders? 		

	Engagement Strategy	Strategy Checklist	Evidence	✓
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within the State, is there a strong relationship between the CTE office and the office of the state chief, as is needed to facilitate engagement with stakeholders and development of the state plan? (This will be particularly important if the CTE program is not directly under the jurisdiction of the state chief.) 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you talked to staff in the governor’s office about ways they can help, such as hosting a convening? 		

	Engagement Strategy	Strategy Checklist	Evidence	✓
Part II: Engagement Best Practices	3. Speak to your audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you created accessible materials for different stakeholder groups aligned to their interests, needs and expertise? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you had your materials translated into multiple languages? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you had your materials reviewed by advocacy or community organizations at the state or national level to check for cultural competency? 		
	4. Use multiple vehicles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you identified the best way to reach and stay in touch with each stakeholder group? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you identified locations that are easy for your stakeholders to reach and will keep them at ease? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you identified locations in diverse geographic locations? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you identified an array of vehicles and tools you can use to connect with different stakeholder groups? 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have you scheduled meetings at times when your stakeholders will be able to attend? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have you given stakeholders multiple opportunities to be heard, in case participation in initial sessions is affected by uncontrollable circumstances (such as the weather)? 		
5. Identify your best ambassadors.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have you identified trusted, well-respected community members to serve as ambassadors for some stakeholder groups? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have you provided your ambassadors with training, guidance and tools so they know to help you and their community? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have you thought about how best to engage with stakeholder groups that have been traditionally under-represented? 		
6. Ask for input before decisions are made, and use it.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have you identified some specific areas on which input from stakeholders will be helpful? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have you documented specifically what is—and is not—on the table for discussion? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have you developed a system or set of tools to allow easy reporting back to your stakeholders? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have you developed mechanisms for considering and responding to public comments on the state-determined levels of performance, and for summarizing the state’s responses in the state plan? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have you developed mechanisms for responding to the public comments received during state’s hearings on the Perkins V state plan, and for summarizing those comments (and the State’s response) in the state plan? 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you developed procedures for taking into consideration recommendations received on the state’s draft plan and, as appropriate, incorporating those recommendations into the final plan? 			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you built in time to revisit decisions along the way to ensure that new information and feedback can be used to inform them? 			
	7. Keep your materials simple and brief.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you created materials to help your stakeholders hold conversations with their peers? 			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you built visuals, graphics and/or animation into your materials? 			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you solicited feedback from stakeholder organizations to check for clarity and cultural relevance? 			
	8. Communicate early and often.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you created a timeline you can update regularly and use to ensure your outreach is consistent and built around key milestones and decision points? 			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you created vehicles to continue to provide your stakeholders with substantive updates on where you are in the planning process, key decisions and next steps? 			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you created a stakeholder communications advisory group to continually gauge the effectiveness of your outreach strategy? 			
	Part III: Sustaining	9. Keep your team informed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your staff know how to access internal and external Perkins V materials or where to direct their questions? 		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you scheduled meetings to update all internal offices on Perkins V planning and to solicit their input? 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have you provided your staff with talking points and guidance on Perkins V so they can be prepared to answer questions when working in the field? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Particularly if the Perkins program is not administered by the SEA, is there a clear delineation of responsibility for carrying out the state’s stakeholder engagement responsibilities and for maintaining communications between relevant offices and agencies? 		
	10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What steps have you taken to reassure stakeholders that this engagement effort will differ from previous, perhaps unsuccessful attempts to engage with them? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How frequently will you review your engagement strategies to ensure you are still getting input from and working with a representative array of stakeholder groups? 		

Part I: Getting Started

An engagement effort of this magnitude and importance can't be everyone's responsibility. **State agencies should quickly designate an internal owner to lead the work and get started, but recognize that one person will not be able to do it all.** In addition to the internal owner of outreach coordination, staff from across the agency will need to be involved to ensure the process runs smoothly and that feedback is used to inform the state's plan. The requirements of Perkins V, calling for deep, meaningful engagement with stakeholders and for close cooperation with other programs and agencies, provide an opportunity for state agencies to use the planning process to forge inter-office and inter-agency relationships that might not have characterized a state's CTE program in the past.

States will have to submit plans (at least their transitional plans) in the spring of 2019, which means an owner needs to be identified so that the stakeholder engagement process may start immediately.

1. Clarify your goals. Before communicating with any stakeholders, states must be clear on what they want to say. Start at the top, with your state's overall strategic vision for CTE, and determine how stakeholders can help you define the goals and the work that needs to be connected to that vision. Keep in mind why you're engaging stakeholders in the first place, and develop goals and a detailed plan to guide your engagement efforts. This isn't about compliance, or about making the most people happy—it's about seeking input from the people most closely tied to the public education system and facilitating community-based implementation supports for state and local CTE policy objectives.



In December 2018 and January 2019, **Mississippi** convened a [listening tour](#) to gather input for the state's Perkins V plan at seven locations around the state. In the meetings with stakeholders, Mississippi Department of Education officials delivered a [PowerPoint presentation](#) that described the major elements of the statute, discussed the alignment of CTE with the state's broader educational objectives, and posed key questions for consideration.

- *Ask stakeholders how they want to be engaged.* Explain how the state agency is defining meaningful engagement, ask stakeholders what methods work best for them and come to a common understanding so stakeholders know what to expect.
- *Let stakeholders know why they were invited.* Let them know that their opinions are respected, that they're key partners and that they are there because the state wants to tap their expertise and experience. Lay out the entire engagement process for them, including the other groups involved so they understand where they fit into the process and what other voices will be heard.
- *Make engagement activities public.* People cannot truly engage in a process if they believe the "real" discussion is happening in a backroom, private conversation. Produce a schedule, publish it online and make it easy to find. Consider livestreaming events so those who cannot attend can still engage.
- *Enter conversations with a sense of the State agency's position, but be open to—and even expect—change based on information learned during the stakeholder engagement process.* States should come to stakeholders with a set of key decision points, not a blank sheet of paper, to give stakeholders the opportunity to provide input and to guide conversations.

2. Work with partner organizations to identify and engage with your stakeholders.



States too often hear from the same group of 20-30 people to represent stakeholders when input is needed on a policy issue. But without broadening the net and reaching out to leaders from different interest groups, ethnicities, demographics and corners of the state, the state agency is getting only a narrow, predictable point of view that is not representative of the state as a whole. Continue to ask yourself: “Who are we missing?”

Ohio is holding its Perkins V [regional meetings](#) at five locations in January and February 2019. At each meeting stakeholder participants will receive a general overview of the law and on the state plan development process and will provide feedback on topics related to Ohio’s plan. In January, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) posted its one-year [transition plan](#) on the ODE website, giving stakeholders the opportunity to comment.

- *Be prepared to feel uncomfortable.* State agencies accustomed to hearing from the same people are likely to get feedback they hadn’t anticipated. You may not agree with it all, but it’s important to listen and to let your stakeholders know they’ve been heard.
- *Leverage existing networks before you create new ones.* Ask partners to connect you with existing community and peer networks, and to encourage leaders in those groups to participate in the engagement effort. Partnering with a stakeholder who the community trusts can put the audience at ease and ensure greater attendance and participation.
- *Work with your national and state-level associations to identify people to engage.* These groups have connections to people who are already involved in working groups and have some level of understanding of the critical issues covered under Perkins V.
- *Balance out your committees with people who bring a range of perspectives and solutions.* Don’t just group people with the same point of view together; guide the discussion by combining differing voices and opinions.

If you’re engaging...

Legislators	Reach out to the legislative leaders and education committee chairs and ask which lawmakers have a special interest in CTE-related issues. Use that outreach to get the conversation started with the leadership and interested lawmakers.
American Indian Tribes	Engaging tribal education stakeholders is different than other stakeholder groups. Tribes are sovereign governments, so start with a government-to-government relationship. Many tribes have an agency for education and a director who can connect you to the parents and community members you need to engage.
Parents	Work with state and local parent groups to identify parents to involve in the process.
Principals and Community College Administrators	The issues at play will impact secondary schools, community colleges, and other CTE providers so it will be critical to engage with principals, community college administrators, and other administrators as a key stakeholder group. They can

	bring a unique school- and college-based perspective on programs and policies that address the most compelling challenges in schools and colleges.
Educators	Some educators may need convincing to participate, based on past experience. Work with unions and associations to engage with educators, and consider ways to address potential barriers to their involvement by providing compensated release time or reimbursement of expenses for school staff.
Businesses and Business Associations	Reach out to a broad array of business sectors in the state (including representatives of small businesses, local and regional chambers of commerce, and employers that are already involved in the state’s workforce development planning) to ensure that your Perkins V plan addresses the full array of occupations and career paths that can be developed through CTE programs. Request employment forecasts for different fields, including new and emerging industries. Cooperate with business in stimulating the growth of CTE programs in growing fields and phasing out programs for which there will be limited employment opportunities.
The State’s Workforce Development Board	Work with the Board to ensure that the state’s CTE programs under Perkins V are fully aligned with the employment development activities the state is carrying out under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, so that the state has a comprehensive, integrated strategy for meeting its economic development and employment needs. This should be the case whether or not a state submits a combined Perkins V-WIOA state plan.

Part II: Engagement Best Practices



Now that you’ve defined your goals and identified your stakeholders, how you engage them *and keep them engaged* is critically important. This section includes a range of best practice strategies that will keep your stakeholders engaged throughout the development of your Perkins V plan and build relationships that will enable you to

continue to gather input from them through implementation and beyond. Use the “**Four I’s**” framework, developed by the USED’s Reform Support Network, as a model as you think about the **purpose** behind your engagement efforts: Is your goal simply to inform? Is it to create opportunities for stakeholders to have their questions



In the fall of 2018, **Advance CTE**, the association of state directors of CTE, in partnership with the Association for Career and Technical Education, the American Association of Community Colleges, and the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity, hosted four [regional meetings](#) around the country to help state leaders determine how to leverage their Perkins V funds in a manner that advances learner access to and success through high-quality CTE programs and programs of study.

answered? Are you creating opportunities for your stakeholders to get involved? Is your goal to earn their support and ultimately inspire them to act?

3. Speak to your audience.¹ Remember that engagement strategies that may be successful in one community may not work in another. Not all stakeholders will come to the table with the same level of education, background on the Perkins Act or interest in the details of policy development. That does not mean that their voices should not be heard. Recognize up front that many of your stakeholders will not be education experts and may need context before they can fully contribute to, and engage in, a valuable discussion.

- *Don't pigeonhole your stakeholders.* Some community groups and stakeholders have expertise in more than one policy area. Ask each stakeholder group what areas are of greatest interest to them, and consider what they can contribute to the state's plan.
- *Anticipate your stakeholders' concerns.* Each group will likely have specific areas that are of interest to them. Be prepared to speak to those topics and answer questions.
- *Have your documents reviewed in advance.* Ask stakeholder and advocacy organizations to review documents, meeting materials and policy positions from their constituencies' perspective. They can help refine your state's work and ensure the content will be culturally competent and relevant to your stakeholders before the engagement begins.
- *Identify a clear point of contact.* Make sure your stakeholders know who at the SEA can answer their questions and can keep them informed about progress along the way.
- *Don't speak over—or under—your stakeholders.* Not all stakeholders will have a background in education. Don't assume they have read the details of the law in advance, but also don't assume they have no information. Speak and provide concise materials that are clearly written, about topics that are relevant to them.
- *Avoid edu-speak.* As much as you can, try to avoid using education jargon or acronyms that non-educators won't understand. If some jargon can't be avoided, include a glossary of terms with your materials.
- *Leave enough time for them to respond.* Don't expect stakeholders to review content and provide input within 24 hours. Acknowledge that you know they're busy and allow them a reasonable amount of time (i.e., 2-3 weeks) to provide feedback in writing.

If you're engaging...

Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents will be more likely to engage in this process if they see the importance of getting involved and feel like their voices will be heard and valued. Frame the issues around how the changes could impact their children and community. ▪ Provide parents with background materials in advance and keep all presentation materials clear and concise. ▪ Anticipate language barriers. Have materials available in person and online in multiple languages and arrange for interpreters at public events. ▪ Ask what has and has not been working well in their child's schools. ▪ Try not to use acronyms and educational jargon; define complex words and phrases when they cannot be avoided.
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¹ See #7, "Keep materials simple and brief," for more on this topic

Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain how this level of flexibility and state control is different from the way the state operated under Perkins IV (the previous version of the Perkins Act) and what that will mean for them.
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4. Use multiple vehicles.



Traditional outreach methods like town hall meetings and press releases are no longer the only—or even the best—ways to reach every audience. Blogs, websites, social media, webinars, focus groups and surveys are among a myriad of other strategies that states can also employ to connect with specific stakeholders. This means that states will need to adopt a strategy that incorporates more than one vehicle to effectively make the connections they need. Not all people get their information in the same way anymore, so to be most effective—and to ensure that no one is inadvertently left out—states need to intentionally seek out and use the vehicles that work best for the people they are trying to reach.

In November 2018, **Florida** held a Perkins V [stakeholder engagement kickoff webinar](#) to share highlights of the new law and describe Florida’s state plan development process. During the webinar, Florida Department of Education described the categories of stakeholders with whom the state is committed consulting, identified the state’s goals under Perkins V, and provided a detailed outline of the procedures the state will use in developing its plan.

- *Meet people where they already are.* Ask to be added to the agenda of community meetings or forums that were previously scheduled instead of creating new ones. Ask partner organizations already meeting with their members to host focus groups.
- *Leverage communication vehicles people are already using.* Many stakeholders already contribute to, and read, monthly newsletters, e-mail distribution lists, and social media accounts. Seek these out and ask the stakeholders who lead these vehicles to help you spread the word.
- *Be conscious of your location.* Consider hosting meetings at nontraditional, neutral sites such as community centers instead of schools or government buildings to make people comfortable.
- *Cover your state.* Stakeholders aren’t likely to travel hours to attend a meeting, so bring the meeting to them. Schedule sessions across the state in easy-to-reach locations in areas with varying income levels and diverse populations.
- *Schedule meetings around the traditional workday hours.* Remember that most stakeholders are not available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the week, so host meetings in the early morning, evenings and on the weekend to ensure all stakeholders will be able to attend.

- Possible vehicles to use**
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.)
 - Websites
 - Webinars
 - In person forums
 - Focus groups
 - Roundtable discussions
 - Newsletters
 - Surveys
 - Email listservs
 - Personalized emails
 - Text messages
 - Online chat
 - Conferences
 - Video conferences

- *Don't just put everything online.* Blogs, websites and other online tools are the simplest ways for states to push out information, but can miss people who either don't look for them, or who don't have access to a computer. Be sure that all of the information available online is also made available on paper and to stakeholder organizations to help with dissemination.
- *Ask what works best and do more of that.* At the end of group meetings, collect contact information of participants and ask them what method of communication they prefer.

If you're engaging...

Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remember that what works in one community may not work in another. Work with community and parent leaders to identify the best approach. ▪ Lean heavily on social media. Parents can be reached easily and directly through Facebook and Twitter. Encourage active and engaged parents to share the information on their pages with their friends and followers. ▪ Many parents of students with disabilities have disabilities themselves. Create accessible materials and consider strategies like holding a webinar instead of sharing a dense white paper. ▪ Offer food, child care and translation and interpretation services to increase participation.
American Indian Tribes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some Indian tribes are geographically dispersed, and will need time to convene. Set and communicate your timeline well in advance so there will be enough time to get a representative group together.
Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with district leaders to make arrangements for guaranteed release time so that educators are able to participate in engagement activities.
Local School Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most school board members have full time jobs outside of their local board responsibilities. Work with member state associations to schedule engagement activities that are convenient and accessible.

5. Identify your best ambassadors. Some stakeholders will respond more openly when they discuss information that could potentially impact them directly with a colleague, peer or trusted source, rather than with representatives from the state agency. Create a relationship map² or draw out a [delivery chain](#) to determine the best ways to reach your stakeholders and your best ambassadors to reach each group. States can develop tools and



In December 2018 **Illinois** held a webinar and commenced a [regional roadshow](#) on Perkins V. State officials have provided stakeholders with detailed information on CTE, on the changes made by Perkins V, on the alignment of Perkins V with the state's educational goals and initiatives, and on the state's plan development and stakeholder engagement processes. Illinois has engaged representatives of business and industry in every stakeholder opportunity. This spring, a Perkins V State Plan work group representing all required stakeholders from across the state will convene to identify strategies and make recommendations to inform the development of the State Plan. Additional information is posted on the state's [website](#).

² See pages 23–24 for a sample timeline template and page 25 for a relationship map grid and template.

resources such as talking points and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents to support outreach by ambassadors to ensure their communication remains clear and that they are set up to gather meaningful feedback and measure responses.

- *Determine when and how to use ambassadors.* Ambassadors can be a great tool for community outreach, but it's important to think critically about with whom and when ambassadors will be effective messengers. Consider how the state agency has interacted with stakeholder groups in the past and if there is a benefit to making a connection with them directly before relying on an ambassador to get their feedback. While some groups may be more responsive to trusted members of their community, others—particularly under-represented groups—may see it as a sign of disrespect if state leaders do not meet with them in person. In these cases, it may be more beneficial to have a state leader *and* an ambassador lead the conversation.
- *Let your stakeholders decide who they want to lead the discussion.* The person leading the engagement for a group needs to be someone the group already trusts and respects. Consider identifying ambassadors from each stakeholder group directly or letting the community decide who should play that role.
- *Make sure your ambassadors know what is expected.* Ambassadors have to be a two-way conduit—their role is to convey the state agency's message to the stakeholders, and then to bring the stakeholder perspective back to the SEA. Clarify expectations before they get started, and provide them with the training and tools they need to ensure they are able to be effective.
- *Invite active participants to play the ambassador role.* At convenings and presentations, ask stakeholders if they would be willing to be part of an ongoing engagement effort or act as ambassadors.

6. Ask for input before decisions are made, and use it.



The intent of Perkins V consultation requirements are to make sure the people affected by the law are at the table from the start of the process. Asking for input on issues or policy changes after decisions have already been made leaves stakeholders feeling devalued, and like their time has been wasted. Approach stakeholders with rough ideas to get their reaction, and be clear from the start on which issues have been resolved and are no longer up for discussion.

Maryland held three meetings in the fall of 2018 to gather input on its state plan. The state subsequently developed a one-year transition plan, posted that plan on the Maryland Department of Education [website](#) (with a request for public comments) and scheduled two more public meetings, in February 2019, to receive feedback on the plan.

- *Clarify what is on—and off—the table.* Let stakeholders know what they will have the authority to help decide, and what is already decided or simply not up for discussion. This level of clarity will help stakeholders understand the role they are being asked to play and help to avoid confusion or conflict.
- *Come with questions you need answered.* Approach stakeholders with draft policies or rough ideas and present them with specific questions that can be used to inform the state's thinking. Provide them with the opportunity to have a direct impact on the plan and make sure their input is reflected on the next draft.
- *Ask for better ideas.* If stakeholders do not agree with the initial thinking, ask them to explain why and to provide alternative ideas or solutions. This will ensure the engagement process is

results-oriented and productive, particularly when discussing difficult topics where there are varying opinions.

- *Close the feedback loop.* Create a reporting mechanism that goes back to the community after the engagement process and explains what you’re using, what you’re not using and why. Explain the state’s thinking and decision-making process so it is clear why some ideas were incorporated and others were not.

If you’re engaging...

Legislators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The state’s Perkins V plan might require legislative changes. Keep legislators well informed so statutory change requests are expected. Provide timelines and an early heads up on the issues, and work around legislative timetables.
Community colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CTE is both a secondary and a postsecondary endeavor, so community colleges and other postsecondary institutions are clearly a constituency that must be consulted before any important decisions on the plan are made. Key issues for consultation are likely to be curriculum, secondary-postsecondary articulation, and personnel preparation, in addition to the allocation of Perkins funds between secondary and postsecondary programs.

7. Keep your materials simple and brief.³ All written, online or presentation materials should be concise and easy-to-understand, written to illustrate how the content relates to student achievement and to your state’s strategic vision. Differentiate your materials by audience, asking yourself what they really need to know, and what questions and concerns they are likely to bring to the discussion. Keep the in-the-weeds detail about process for discussions with practitioners and those with specific expertise or experience in the topic; frame other content on how individual stakeholder groups will be impacted and how things will change.

- *Create materials your stakeholders can share.* Written content should be developed to guide your stakeholder discussions, but should also be created with a broader audience in mind. Think about how your stakeholders can use the materials in a conversation with their colleagues, and include talking points to help guide that discussion.
- *Avoid edu-speak.* Watch out for acronyms and education jargon. Define them when they can’t be avoided, but aim to keep your materials clear and easy to understand for all audiences.
- *Use visuals.* Some audiences will have an easier time understanding complex topics if they are explained using a graphic, animation or visual rather than through a lengthy white paper or set of bulleted items. Consider ways to incorporate visuals to represent data or complex issues.
- *Have your documents reviewed in advance.* Ask stakeholder and advocacy organizations to review documents, meeting materials and policy positions from their constituencies’ perspective. They can help refine SEA’s work and ensure the content will be culturally competent and relevant to your stakeholders before the engagement begins.

If you’re engaging...

³ See #3, “Speak to your audience,” for more on this topic.

Legislators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess what information legislators and their staff need and give it to them in a simple format as early as possible in the process. Consider holding legislative briefings with lawmakers and/or their staff at key points, and provide regular, updated materials. When possible, localize to relate back to their districts or regions.
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8. Communicate early and often. Do not let your stakeholders first hear about changes in CTE policy from other stakeholders or the news media. The changes you are making could be significant, so proactively take steps to own the message and create opportunities and tools for stakeholders to have their questions answered and provide input along the way. Generate a regular, reliable stream of information that you make available in multiple formats and have translated into multiple languages to keep your stakeholders informed, and to keep the public aware of your process, decisions as they are made, and next steps. Utilize your ambassadors, state-level associations and other partners to help disseminate information along the way.

- *Create a timeline to plan out your strategy.* Develop a timeline that you continually update to work backwards from your milestones, decision points and deadlines to ensure your engagement and outreach are steady and ongoing.⁴
- *Create a communications advisory group.* Retain a group of key stakeholders as advisors throughout the Perkins V planning process to continually gauge the effectiveness of your communications strategy and suggest course corrections when they're needed.
- *Only communicate when you have something to say.* Communicate frequently, but not just for the sake of communicating. Guard against communicating without substance. Communication can include synthesis of feedback, updates on plan development, specific requests for input, reports on status of key decision points, an update on the timeline, etc. If your stakeholders don't feel engaged or that they're learning something, they may withdraw.

If you're engaging...

Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Having the support of the governor's office from the start can make it easier to secure resources and help from other state agencies. Work with the staff in the executive branch to help them understand the state's implementation plan and how it aligns to the strategic vision, and urge them to make it a key part of the governor's education agenda.
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Part III: Sustaining Engagement

You've worked hard to build relationships with stakeholders from across your state—don't stop there. States that regularly seek input from a wide array of stakeholder groups are more likely to have widespread support for new initiatives and can benefit from their continued engagement and involvement in policy development and implementation. These new connections should not end when Perkins V implementation begins—take the time to turn them into long-term relationships that can benefit the students in your public schools for years to come.

⁴ See pages 23–24 for a sample timeline and template.

- 9. Keep your team informed.** Your internal team represents a group of both critical stakeholders and potential ambassadors. Make sure they are included in any outreach you do with other stakeholder groups and provide them with access to information about key themes, dates and decision points. Hold information sessions for your internal team to keep them informed and to seek their input.
- *Rely on your internal planning team.* Senior leaders from across the agency should be involved with the SEA's internal Perkins V planning team. Urge them to share updates with their staff and to solicit input on key decision points at unit meetings.
 - *Be coordinated.* Make sure that stakeholder outreach is coordinated through a single office or person to avoid overwhelming groups with outreach from multiple sources within the SEA.
 - *Share your outreach materials.* The materials you create for external stakeholders can be used internally as well. Distribute the informational material at staff meetings, make them available online and reference them in internal newsletters.
 - *Provide staff with talking points.* Even SEA staff who are not involved in the detailed Perkins V planning may be approached with questions from stakeholders outside of the agency. Provide all internal staff with basic talking points and key dates throughout the process so they can respond to questions if asked. Take special care to equip agency staff who spend the most time in schools and colleges with as much information as possible.
- 10. Turn these new connections into long-term relationships.** The stakeholder engagement process required under Perkins V provides states with an opportunity to create new relationships with stakeholders who have not traditionally been at the table and model how things will be done in the future. Engage with a wider array of stakeholder groups, actively listen to their input, answer their questions and show how their feedback is used to strengthen your plan. Remember that long-term relationships and engagement is not about agreeing 100 percent of the time, but about working through your issues together. Seek to deepen your relationships with civil rights organizations, businesses, workforce boards, unions, administrator associations, postsecondary institutions, other agencies and advocacy groups through this process and commit to working together in the future to expand the SEA's reach and support system.
- *Play the long game.* Remember that Perkins V's changes are going to take time to implement and will have a lasting impact on the state. States should use the engagement and planning process to establish strong relationships with stakeholder groups so they can all have a sense of ownership in the final plan and work together on course corrections as they arise.
 - *Set up regular check points.* Schedule at least two or three check-ins during the first year of implementation to get stakeholder reaction and suggestions for improvement. These can be in-person or virtual, but they will demonstrate to stakeholders that their input is valued and how you intend to follow up.
 - *Report on your results.* After the first year of Perkins V, publish a report on the lessons learned and how implementation of the Act can improve. Give credit to stakeholders who suggested improvement strategies you intend to adopt.
 - *Create an advisory group but don't just rely on them to represent your stakeholders.* States should develop an advisory group that includes representatives of key stakeholder groups, but engagement with those communities should not end there. Continue to engage and communicate with larger groups of stakeholders to identify areas where improvements are needed and potential solutions.

If you're engaging...

Traditionally under-represented groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Some groups that have not been effectively engaged in the past may have low expectations for this process. Use the Perkins V plan development as an opportunity to create two-way dialogue and build a reciprocal relationship that can lead to ongoing, meaningful collaboration.
Special populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Perkins V holds CTE programs accountable for the performance of (and calls for engagement with) groups of students that go beyond the subgroups listed in ESSA. Examples include students pursuing careers that are non-traditional for their gender, single parents, and out-of-work individuals. In the past, these students have not always been equitably served by CTE programs. Use the Perkins V consultation process to forge new relationships with those groups and to ensure that their needs are addressed.

Planning Tools

The tools on the following pages can be used to help you organize your thinking, clarify your timeline, identify your ambassadors and map out your engagement strategy. The tools include:

- 1. Timeline.** Use this template to map out the milestones, meetings and decision points that are coming over the next year.
- 2. Influencer Map.** Use this 2x2 grid to identify your key partners and influencers who support the SEA and have the most influence in the field and among stakeholders. The ones you place in the middle and top right (the ones with the most influence who are the most supportive of the work) are the ones who have the most potential to act as your ambassadors.
- 3. Relationship map.** Once you have identified your ambassadors, add them to the grid, identify the stakeholders they can most easily reach and list their best strategies and assets.
- 4. Action plan.** Use your timeline and relationship map to develop your action plan, detailing action steps, deadlines, owners, decision points and timeline. Planning is an iterative process, so develop this action plan to be a living document that will be updated regularly.
- 5. Stakeholder Engagement List.** This chart details which stakeholder groups states are required to engage under each provision of Perkins V that requires engagement.
- 6. Additional Resources.** These stakeholder engagement and outreach guides were created for other initiatives and organizations, but may offer advice for your specific circumstances.

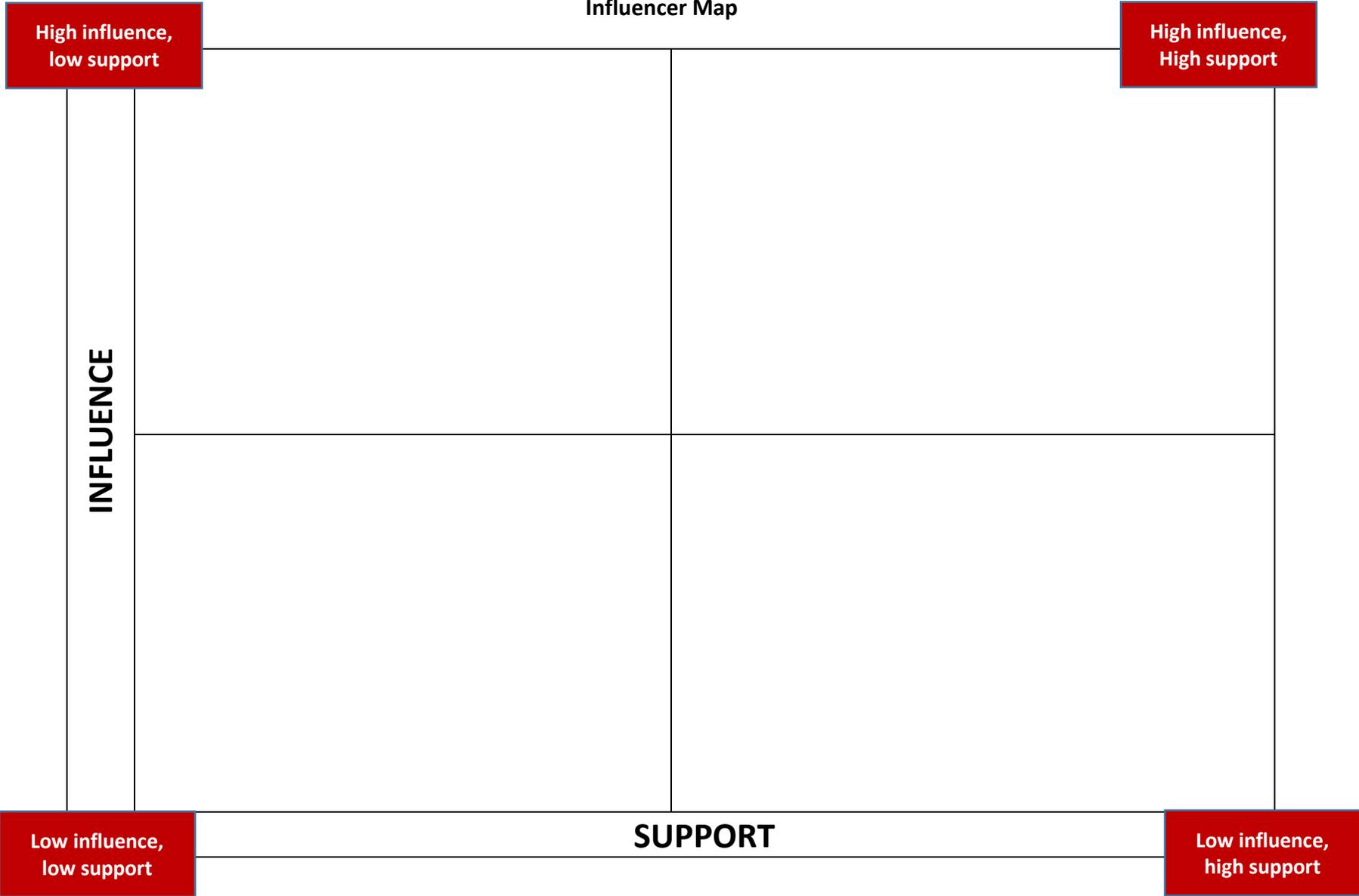
Timeline (January–July 2019)

	Jan 2019	February	March	April	May	June	July
OUTREACH	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	
MEETINGS	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	
MILESTONES		▪	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ USED issues FY 2019 estimated allocations ▪ ED issues final Perkins V State plan guidance 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5/24 – Deadline for Perkins V transition or final plans ▪ USED begins review and approval process 	▪	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 7/1: States receive first installment of FY 19 (school year 2019-20) funds
DECISIONS	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪

Timeline (August 2019–February 2020)

	Aug 2019	September	October	November	December	Jan 2020	February
OUTREACH	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
MEETINGS	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
MILESTONES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USED completes review and approval of state plans (120 days after submission of plan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School year 2019-20 begins; first year of full implementation of Perkins V 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10/1: States receive second allocation of FY 2019 funds 	▪	▪	▪	▪
DECISIONS	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪

Influencer Map



Relationship Map

Use this table to identify who your most powerful influencers are best suited to reach. List the people or groups you plotted in the center and top right of your Influencers Map below, and check off the people or groups to whom they are the most closely tied. Lastly, use the column on the right to list out the tactics these influencers already use or could leverage to reach the stakeholders. Each SEA’s list will look different, so use the blank columns to identify any other stakeholder groups that are unique to your state.

Influencers	Parents	Teachers and College Faculty	School Leaders	Disabilities Community	Civil Rights Community	English Language	Governor	Legislators	Business Community	Labor Organizations	Charter Schools	School Boards or Committees	Tribes	Strategy/Vehicles/Approach
Ex: Community College	X			X	X	X						X		Public meetings, newsletters, ties to minority community

Action Plan

Use this grid to frame your action plan.

Action	Owner	Deadline	Obstacles	Solutions	Notes

List of Stakeholders for Perkins V Engagement

The stakeholders listed below are the ones that states are **required** to engage with under Perkins V. **States should not stop there** and should consider also inviting representatives of other stakeholder groups who can represent the best interests of your state.

Required Stakeholders For SEA Consultation, Perkins V Program Responsibility	General State Administration (Section 121(a)(2))	State Plan Hearings (Section 121(a)(3))	State Plan Consultation (Section 121(c)(1) and (e))	Continued Participation in State Decision-Making (Section 122(c)(2))	Continued Involvement in Program Planning, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (Section 121(d)(12))	Establishment of Performance Measures (Section 113(b)(1))	Establishment of State-Developed Levels of Performance (Section 113(b)(3)(B)(i))
State Policymakers and Agencies							
Governor	X		X	X			
State Community College Agency			X	X			
State Adult Education Agency ⁵			X	X			
Other State Agencies with Authority over CTE			X	X			
State Workforce Board			X	X			X
Agencies Serving Out-of School Youth, Homeless Children and Youth, and At-Risk Youth			X	X			X
State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth			X	X			X
Other State Officials	X						
Districts, Postsecondary Institutions, Staff							
Eligible Recipients (LEAs and Postsecondary Institutions)	X	X	X	X		X	X

⁵ When this agency is not within the SEA

Where Applicable, Representatives of 2-Year Minority-Serving Institutions, including HBCUs and Tribal Colleges	X		X	X			X
Adult CTE Providers			X	X			X
Teachers	X	X	X	X	X		X
College Faculty	X	X	X	X	X		X
School Leaders		X	X	X			X
Specialized Instructional Support Personnel	X	X	X	X			X
Paraprofessionals	X	X	X	X	X		X
Guidance Counselors			X	X			X
Charter School Leaders/Representatives, If Applicable	X	X	X	X			X
Authorized Public Chartering Agencies, if Applicable	X	X					
Families and Communities							
Parents	X	X	X	X	X		X
Students	X	X	X	X			X
Community Organizations	X	X					
Employers and Businesses (Including Small Businesses)	X	X	X ⁶	X ⁷	X		X ⁷
Labor Organizations	X	X	X	X	X		X
Indian Tribes or Tribal Organizations, If Applicable	X	X	X	X	X		X
Individuals with Disabilities			X	X			X
Members and Representatives of Special Populations			X	X			X
Other Local Officials	X						

⁶ Must include, as appropriate, representatives of industry and sector partnerships in the State.

Additional Resources

Perkins V and Stakeholder Engagement Resources

[Draft Guide for the Submission of Perkins V State Plans](#)

U. S. Department of Education, 2018

[Perkins Collaborative Resource Network](#)

[Planning for Engagement: Identifying Key Stakeholders for Perkins V](#)

Advance CTE, 2018

General Stakeholder Engagement Resources

[Communications and Engagement Assessment Rubric](#)

[Assessment Rubric State Facilitator's Guide](#)

The Reform Support Network, 2013

[Educator Evaluation Communications Toolkit](#)

The Reform Support Network, 2013

[From "Inform" to "Inspire": A Framework for Communications and Engagement](#)

The Reform Support Network, 2013

[Leading by Convening: A Blueprint for Authentic Engagement](#)

The IDEA Partnership, 2014

[Moving Toward Equity Stakeholder Engagement Guide](#)

The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at AIR, 2014

[Social Media Tips Sheet: Innovative Engagement](#)

The Reform Support Network, 2014

[Stakeholder Outreach and Sustainability Toolkit](#)

BroadBandUSA, 2010

[State Tribal Consultation Policy Manual](#)

National Indian Education Association, 2016