A Closer Look at Programs of Study

**Programs of Study**

Programs of study must incorporate secondary and postsecondary education elements; include academic and career and technical content in a coordinated, non-duplicative progression of courses; and lead to an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level, or an associate or bachelor's degree.

**Feature**

By Alisha Hyslop

In the early stages of Perkins implementation, most of the work related to new programs of study was completed at the state level as decisions were made about development strategies and local requirements. According to the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium, states generally went in two directions related to programs of study:

1. States developed state-level models and either mandated local adoption of the programs of study or allowed for their voluntary use.

2. States created guidelines for local development of programs of study that required state approval following specified criteria or guidelines.

In some states, a combination of the two approaches was used, or state-level models are being phased in over time. Following these state decisions, local Perkins grantees dug into their own Perkins implementation efforts in the context of their states' Perkins five-year plans.

In Wisconsin, the state leaned more toward the second approach outlined above, creating sample planning templates for secondary and postsecondary programs to use as a uniform framework for developing complete programs of study, and providing a “Program of Study Implementation Component Guide” and a self-assessment tool for use in implementing programs of study. The state is also using Perkins reserve funds to work on the development of a career pathways Web site. The mission of the Wisconsin Career Pathways Web Site Project is to partner with educational organizations, government and business/industry to develop a feasibility analysis report with recommendations to create a statewide Career Pathways Web Site to be accessed by Wisconsin citizens in the pursuit of career planning and pathway sharing. The site would also be designed to share best practices in programs of study among institutions and stakeholders across the state.