

The Role of Industry in Advancing CTE Without Limits

Without Limits: A Shared Vision for the Future of Career Technical Education, developed by Advance CTE and supported by an additional 38 national organizations, puts forth a bold vision for a cohesive, flexible and responsive career preparation ecosystem that will close equity gaps in educational outcomes and workforce readiness and leverage Career Technical Education (CTE) as a catalyst for ensuring that each learner can reach success in the career of their choice.

Industry leaders, employers and associations must play an active role in supporting such a career preparation ecosystem to ensure that it is truly responsive to their needs and the needs of the ever-evolving workforce. Critically, industry must not simply be a beneficiary of the ecosystem but rather a full partner in its design, delivery and success. When learners are able to access equitable, skills-based education, businesses can be sure that they have a more diverse pipeline of talent who have the skills they need to both enter and continue to progress in their careers over their lifetimes. This is especially important given the accelerating pace of technological innovation and other economic shifts that are rapidly changing the nature of work itself.

CTE Without Limits lays out five inter-connected and equally critical principles:



Each learner engages in a cohesive, flexible and responsive career preparation ecosystem.



Each learner feels welcome in, is supported by and has the means to succeed in the career preparation ecosystem.



Each learner skillfully navigates their own career journey.



Each learner's skills are counted, valued and portable.



Each learner can access CTE without borders.

Collaboration With Local and State Leaders Is Key

As a first step, industry and business leaders should be developing and sustaining collaborative partnerships with state and local CTE leaders. Understanding the current career preparation ecosystem is essential to aligning talent pipeline strategies with education pathways and ensuring that CTE programs reflect industry needs. Industry can also play a critical role as a convener — bringing together leaders from school districts, community and technical colleges and workforce

development boards — to engage in discussions about the current landscape and identify clear priorities and action steps for how to strengthen the career preparation ecosystem at the state and local levels.

How Industry Can Support the Career Preparation Ecosystem

CTE Without Limits outlines specific actions industry and the business community can take to advance CTE and responsive career preparation ecosystems:

Align the career preparation ecosystem with the talent pipeline and provide transparent and actionable data

Aligning the talent pipeline strategies with the state’s career preparation ecosystem can help ensure that the state, districts, institutions and learners are able to access better information about the changing nature of work and the most in-demand competencies as well as critical education outcomes data and labor market data. Industry and public sector leaders must partner to build and maintain trusted systems for identifying and validating credentials of value as well as collaboratively develop and implement connected work-based learning programs and systems.

Expand skills-based hiring practices that value competencies

To help advance a career preparation ecosystem that focuses on skills and competencies — and does not just continue to default to valuing only degrees, which can limit the diversity of a candidate pool — employers need to develop and implement skills-based hiring practices. Under-valuing non-degree skills credentialing programs has a tremendous cost to employers and can leave behind workers with great experience but less traditional or no degrees. By supporting skills-based hiring practices, employers can send a clear signal to educational institutions around what they value most.

Leverage a national framework for connecting education and the workforce

There is great value in having a shared framework that can support cross-state collaboration, provide a common language across education and industry, and enable cross-state comparisons and sharing. Industry leaders can collaborate with state CTE leaders in updating the National Career Clusters® Framework, which provides structural alignments and a common language to bridge education and work. The Framework aims to empower each learner with the information they need to explore dynamic and evolving career options and then help identify what they need to do to be well prepared for their chosen field.

Explore the Vision

These actions represent some of the key steps industry leaders must take to ensure that CTE programs and experiences are meaningful for learners and responsive to industry needs. The vision is ambitious and cannot be achieved without the involvement of industry partners.

To read the full vision, access additional resources and sign up to stay engaged, please visit www.careertech.org/without-limits.