



## Supporting Districts and Schools in their Recruitment Efforts

Stronger relationships,  
better engagement

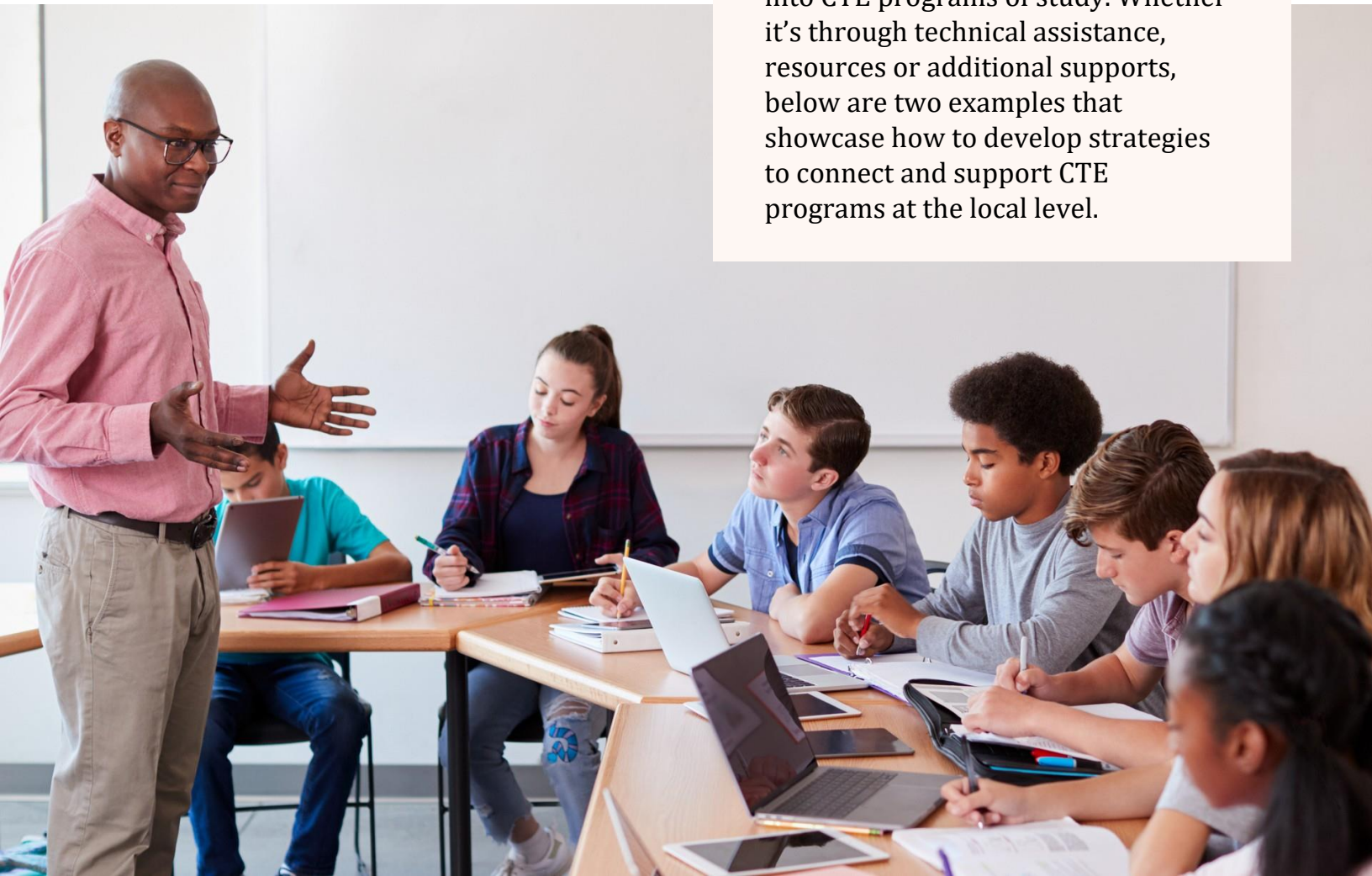
In a rapidly changing world, it is more important than ever for learners of all ages to develop the skills and experiences necessary to succeed in the high-wage, high-skilled and high-demand careers of their choosing.

**Career Technical Education (CTE)** is working in every state to help learners succeed, while also providing employers with skilled and talented employees across a range of industries, from advanced manufacturing to media production. In total, around 12.5 million students are enrolled in CTE across the nation — but industry skill gaps and unfulfilled employee potential remains. To connect more students to CTE programs, Advance CTE compiled model programs to address the challenge of better communicating with families and students about CTE options.

**Advance CTE** has worked with states to pilot innovative and effective models to communicate the many benefits of CTE to key stakeholders, students and their families, to guarantee career success for each learner. This case study is one of three that highlights the exciting work being done across the country to reach local stakeholders, create communications strategies that emphasize digital mediums and develop messaging that resonates with specific audiences.

## Introduction

States play an important role in supporting districts and schools in their efforts to recruit more students into CTE programs of study. Whether it's through technical assistance, resources or additional supports, below are two examples that showcase how to develop strategies to connect and support CTE programs at the local level.



## A Multi-Pronged Approach to Local Engagement

*How the Colorado Community College System supported local stakeholders to increase engagement*

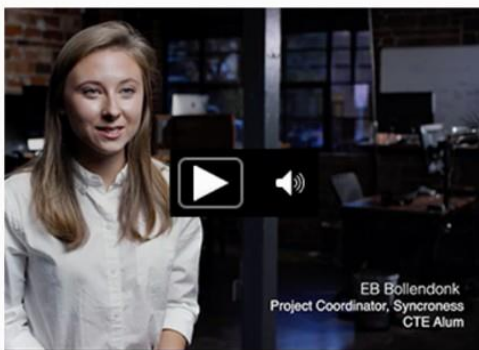
To develop branding materials consistent with a 21st century vision of CTE, the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) partnered with state and local stakeholders in a multi-year process aimed at boosting enrollment and engagement.

First, through a year-long rebranding process, the CCCS team created a series of [compelling videos](#) and materials that could be adapted at the local level to provide a general overview of CTE for school counselors, students and families. To incentivize engagement, CCCS released a request for proposals (RFP) to Colorado districts that would like to use the new materials as part of local recruitment and communication strategies. CCCS then provided small grants to 13 districts — six rural, four suburban and three urban — along with technical assistance to help the districts adapt the messaging and materials to their needs.

Additional funding was given to districts to begin promotion and recruitment at the elementary and middle school levels to introduce CTE to students and families at a young age.

To build on this local stakeholder engagement, CCCS held a now-annual pre-conference at the Colorado School Counselors Association's annual conference entitled *CTE 101*. The pre-conference provides opportunities for school counselors to earn their [CTE Specialist credentials](#), which includes two masters level courses in addition to the credentialing course. *CTE 101* includes: tools and resources on messaging; strategies to use when talking to parents and students; and updated fact sheets, targeted talking points, posts, videos and more.

Then, throughout the year, CCCS worked with various public school districts to hold *CTE 101* and messaging trainings for every middle and high school counselor in their respective districts, and provided them with additional resources to support CTE teachers.



VIDEO: Colorado CTE for Students



VIDEO: Colorado CTE for Parents



VIDEO: Colorado CTE for Counselors

## The Power of Active Listening

*How the Idaho Division of Career & Technical Education used a listening tour to support local districts with their outreach and recruitment*

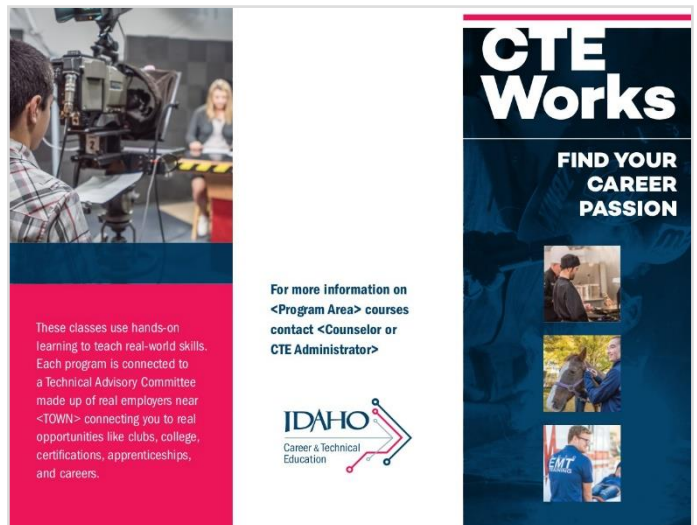
In an effort to assist districts with developing CTE messaging and recruitment strategies, the Idaho Division of Career & Technical Education (Idaho CTE) conducted a statewide listening tour, meeting with 138 administrators, school counselors and advisors, to share findings from [The Value and Promise of Career Technical Education](#), a research report by Advance CTE. The state then solicited interest from partners in a focused CTE recruiting effort, with 17 districts agreeing to participate in discussions around what materials and strategies might work best for their communities.

The districts worked with state staff through email and phone calls to discuss their recruitment challenges and detail how they engaged students and families. Idaho CTE staff collected all current recruitment materials from districts and discussed with districts what is and isn't working in their current recruitment activities.

Based on this feedback, they developed and provided customizable materials including fliers, postcards, brochures, posters and displays to provide a bank of resources districts could use right away.

Staff from Idaho CTE then traveled to each district to spend a day building an outreach and recruitment strategy specific to their district needs.

Districts came up with a diverse range of strategies and were made aware of available funding to continue these efforts while all templates and resources were made available statewide.




## Conclusion

As states and communities continue to build and strengthen relationships to expand the reach of CTE to new places and new audiences, it is important to engage and collect ideas from key local stakeholders. Their expertise, experience and insight can help to inform thinking and drive real action in support of outreach and recruitment strategies they can create a stronger, more unified voice on the importance of CTE, while helping states and local stakeholders reach their long-term communication goals.

## Additional Resources Available

- [Increasing student enrollment in CTE programs: Parent Engagement tool](#)
- [Do's and Don'ts for engaging learners and families around CTE](#)
- [Putting real-world skills to work: An employer guide for CTE](#)

Visit Advance CTE's "[Promote CTE](#)" page for more helpful tips.

