



## The Role of CTE in Statewide Attainment Goals

As of May 2018, 41 states had set statewide attainment goals for the percentage of adults holding postsecondary degrees or credentials by a certain year. These efforts have been sparked by Lumina Foundation's 2025 national credential attainment goal – 60 percent of Americans holding a credential beyond a high school diploma by 2025<sup>i</sup> – although states' goals range from 55 percent to 80 percent.

The early focus of Lumina's goal (and, by extension, most states' goals) was on the attainment of associate and bachelor's degrees, primarily because those were the easiest degrees to track via current data systems. More recently, however, states are embracing the role that industry-recognized credentials and sub-baccalaureate certificates can and should play in upskilling their citizenry.

To meet the needs of our economy, states must support the attainment of the full range of postsecondary credentials that have value in the labor market – from apprenticeships and industry-recognized credentials to master's degrees and beyond.

### How CTE Can Help

The goal of Career Technical Education (CTE) is to prepare learners for the careers of their choice – serving over eight million high school and nearly four million postsecondary students. As the economy has evolved to require a greater degree of knowledge and skills, so has CTE, with pathways offered in every sector and industry and a particular focus on "high-skill, high-wage and high-demand" careers.

Additionally, more states, schools and institutions are implementing programs of study, or CTE pathways that include a sequence of technical and academic coursework, extend between secondary and postsecondary systems with opportunities for early postsecondary credit, and are anchored in credentials of value. As such, CTE can and should be a key driver in achieving state attainment goals.

### *Count ALL Credentials of Value towards Attainment*

There are about 9.3 million "good jobs" in today's economy that pay a median wage of \$55,000 and are held by individuals with more than a high school diploma and less than a two-year degree. Another seven million good jobs are held by those with associate degrees.<sup>ii</sup> While many learners in CTE programs do go on to earn two- and four-year degrees, many others earn industry-recognized credentials, which are postsecondary certificates and apprenticeship credentials that have great labor market value. States should recognize these credentials in their attainment targets.

One caveat: with the overwhelming number of credentials on the market today – estimated at over 334,000<sup>iii</sup> – CTE and workforce development are leading a movement to develop employer-informed, curated lists of high-value credentials. As states embrace credentials beyond two- and four-year degrees, this work is critical to ensure learners at all levels are not earning just any credential but one that prepares them for success in the workforce.

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### *Leverage Secondary CTE to Meet Statewide Attainment Goals*

Increasingly, high school students taking a concentration of CTE are just as likely to go on to postsecondary education as their non-CTE peers<sup>iv</sup> – and are more likely to enter with workplace experiences and/or industry-recognized credentials. For example, in 2016, more than 5,200 high school students in Ohio earned state-approved industry-recognized credentials.<sup>v</sup> States should include the expansion of CTE pathways and meaningful college and career advising systems as part of their attainment strategy.

### *Support Postsecondary CTE as a Platform for Credential and Degree Attainment*

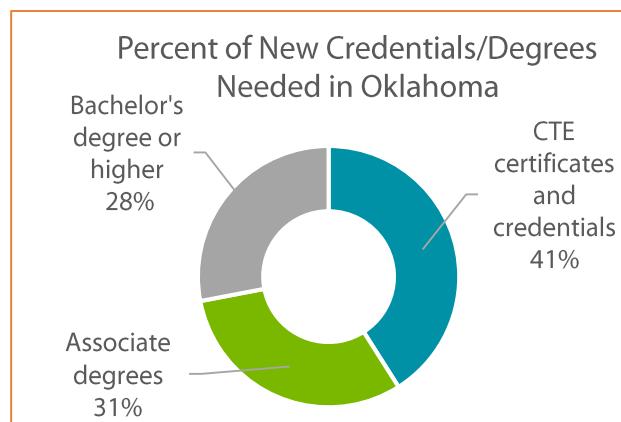
Postsecondary students enrolled in CTE programs also have an average attainment rate of 56.8 percent (counting credentials, certificates and degrees at two-year institutions).<sup>vi</sup> By comparison, the average graduation rate at two-year institutions is 29 percent,<sup>vii</sup> with only 39 percent of students completing after six years.<sup>viii</sup>

### *Bring CTE to the Table as a Partner*

Finally, as states develop and refine their overarching strategies and plans – which is likely, given the 2018 election cycle – CTE leaders and stakeholders should be part of those discussions to ensure alignment. A statewide attainment goal can serve as the driver of a state’s economic and workforce vision, of which CTE must be a part.

### **States Connecting the Dots**

In 2016, Governor Mary Fallin announced *Launch Oklahoma*, an initiative to support the goal of 70 percent of Oklahomans between the ages of 25-64 attaining a postsecondary degree, certificate or credential by 2025. As a first step, Gov. Fallin launched a cross-sector task force, which included leadership from the Cabinet Secretary of Education and Workforce Development, the State Regents for Higher Education, the Department of Career and Technology Education, the Office of Workforce Development, the State Department of Education, the Department of Commerce and the State Chamber of Commerce.



The state has calculated that, to meet its goals and the needs of its workforce, Oklahomans must earn more than 880,000 degrees and credentials over eight years, 41 percent of which should be CTE certificates or credentials.<sup>ix</sup>

Oklahoma also created targets for its seven Key Economic Network (KEN) regions, disaggregated by the number of CTE certificate or industry-based credentials, associate degrees and bachelor’s degrees needed in each region to reach the statewide goal of 70 percent of the Oklahoma workforce having education and training beyond high school.

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In 2013, **Tennessee** Governor Bill Haslam launched the *Drive to 55* campaign, challenging the state to increase the number of Tennesseans with a college degree or certificate to 55 percent by the year 2025. This attainment goal serves as the umbrella for a number of statewide initiatives, including Tennessee Promise, which provides up to two free years of community college at any of the state's 13 community colleges or 27 Colleges of Applied Technology in addition to learner supports and mentors that help high school students throughout the college application process.<sup>x</sup>

More broadly, state agencies and partners regularly connect and expand their own work related to CTE pathways to the overarching campaign goal. State efforts to improve access to and the quality of CTE pathways through a comprehensive, multi-year overhaul of CTE course standards; the launch of the Pathways Tennessee initiative;<sup>xi</sup> and an overhaul of its K-12 work-based learning policies and practices<sup>xii</sup> are grounded in the statewide attainment goal. Drive to 55 was also included as part of the vision for the state's Every Student Succeeds Act plan, supported by the state's inclusion of early postsecondary credit opportunities in its new accountability system as a means of bolstering the pipeline of credentialed citizens.

Finally, **New Jersey** recently launched a campaign called *65 by '25: Many Paths, One Future*, setting the goal to raise the percentage of New Jersey residents who have attained an industry-valued credential or college degree from the current 50 percent up to 65 percent by 2025. The initiative is jointly supported by the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the Department of Education and identifies the following postsecondary experiences as being pathways to attainment:

- Associate and bachelor's degrees or beyond;
- Industry-valued credentials offered at the secondary or postsecondary levels;
- Apprenticeship programs that lead to college credit; and

**To meet this ambitious goal, we must focus on the following Cornerstones for Success:**



**1. Provide career awareness for all students and adults:**

All individuals need access to high quality, reliable information to make decisions about their education and their career. This information is being provided by high schools, colleges, community organizations and libraries through the state's Career Connections network.



**2. Grow high school /college partnerships:**

These partnerships provide students an opportunity to earn a credential and college credit while in high school and can assist students to transition to college.



**3. Expand credit-bearing credential programs in colleges and universities:**

These programs help students get on a pathway to a college degree while obtaining industry-valued skills. The state's STEM Pathways Network, Talent Networks and Talent Development Centers are working with colleges and universities to expand these programs.



**4. Strengthen two-and four-year college partnerships:**

These efforts create pathways to a four-year degree while increasing access and affordability. A statewide transfer articulation agreement, reverse transfer agreements and new innovative connections are all critical to this effort.



**5. Enhanced commitment to equity:**

Recognizing the rich diversity of our population, we will identify the gaps in opportunity and attainment, expand best practices to close equity gaps, and strengthen the role of higher education through New Jersey's Coalition of Anchor Institutions and Coalition for Excellence and Equity in Education.



**6. Make it easier for adults to earn a credential or degree:**

The state is expanding the use of Prior Learning Assessments and competency-based assessment and building partnerships with the military. These efforts will help more adults obtain college credit for work and experience and ultimately help them to earn a credential or degree.



**7. Expand work experience programs for students:**

Internships, apprenticeships, structured learning experiences, and mentoring all provide an opportunity for students to learn valuable skills on the job while helping to inform their career decisions. The state's Many Paths, One Future Internship program is helping businesses hire paid-interns. Service-learning opportunities with Campus Compact are helping students obtain valuable experience.



**8. Enhance the partnerships between business and education:**

Employers play an essential role by informing curriculum and instruction and assisting colleges and universities to be real-time responsive to changing demands.

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- The awarding of college credit based on work experience or military service.

Perhaps most exciting is that New Jersey also identified eight cornerstones of success, which start with building career awareness, offering work experience programs and a focus on equity.<sup>xiii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/01-statewide-attainment-goals.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://goodjobsdata.org/wp-content/uploads/Good-Jobs-wo-BA-final.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> [http://credentialengine.org/content/articles/Counting\\_US\\_Secondary\\_and\\_Postsecondary\\_Credentials\\_April\\_2018.pdf](http://credentialengine.org/content/articles/Counting_US_Secondary_and_Postsecondary_Credentials_April_2018.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.3102/0002831217734805>

<sup>v</sup> <http://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/Pages/Download-Data.aspx>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://cte.ed.gov/profiles/national-summary>

<sup>vii</sup> Graduation rate within 150 percent of normal-time for first-time, full-time degree/certificate-seeking students.

[https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator\\_ctr.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_ctr.asp)

<sup>viii</sup> <https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/trends-in-community-colleges-research-brief.pdf>

<sup>ix</sup> <https://oklahomaworks.gov/docs/2017/04/Launch-OK-Strategic-Recommendations-2017.pdf>

<sup>x</sup> <http://driveto55.org/initiatives/tennessee-promise/>

<sup>xi</sup> <https://www.tn.gov/education/pathwaystn.html>

<sup>xii</sup> <https://careertech.org/resource/connecting-classrooms-to-careers-statewide-vision>

<sup>xiii</sup> <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5967d52fa803bba0f6c59cbf/t/59700fc1cd0f681d1ce1c23e/1500516297004/WD-156.pdf>

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