

# Use Core Indicators to Track the Success of Special Populations in Career Technical Education



The support you provide to your students through Federal Perkins legislation can guide students into rewarding careers. As you build your Career Technical Education (CTE) program, use core indicators to track the success of your CTE students. The results can be used to enhance your methods for attracting, retaining and graduating students prepared to work in your community. This brief will help you use the core indicators as tools to welcome and support students, especially those from special populations.

## Core Indicators: Building Blocks of Success

The Federal Perkins legislation identifies five core indicators to measure the effectiveness of Career Technical Education (CTE) at the post-secondary level:

1. **Technical Skill Attainment** in CTE courses.
2. **Completion** of a CTE credential, certificate or degree.
3. **Persistence** in higher education including transfer for further instruction.
4. **Employment** or placement in military service or apprenticeship programs.
- 5a. **Nontraditional Participation** in a CTE training area in which fewer than 25% of the *employees* in that field are of the student's gender.
- 5b. **Nontraditional Completion** of a CTE training area in which fewer than 25% of the *employees* in that area are of the student's gender.

### Data Requirements

Institutions receiving Perkins CTE funding must establish a performance goal for each of these indicators. Data must be submitted for all CTE students identifying their gender, race/ethnicity, and special population status. The data are submitted by each institution to the California Community College Chancellor's Office which prepares reports and forms for district review and analysis.

## CORE INDICATOR CALCULATIONS

**1. TECHNICAL SKILL ATTAINMENT** - The percent of concentrators (students who have successfully completed a minimum of 12 units of related CTE coursework) who earn a GPA of 2.0 or above in CTE courses above the introductory level.

**2. COMPLETION** - The percent of CTE students who receive a degree, certificate, or equivalent, or complete a transfer program and are classified as transfer ready.

**3. PERSISTENCE AND TRANSFER** - The percent of CTE student concentrators (students who have successfully completed a minimum of 12 units of related CTE coursework) who persist in education at the community college level or transfer to a two or four-year institution.

**4. STUDENT PLACEMENT** - The percent of CTE students who have earnings the following year (as found in the unemployment insurance base wage file) or are in an apprenticeship program, or the military.

**5A. NONTRADITIONAL PARTICIPATION** - The percent of CTE concentrators (students who have successfully completed a minimum of 12 units of related CTE coursework) who are in training programs leading to employment in occupations nontraditional for their gender. A listing of the California CTE programs that are nontraditional is available at <http://www.cccspecialpopulations.org/resources/publications.htm>.

**5B. NONTRADITIONAL COMPLETION** - The percent of students who complete programs classified as nontraditional (see above) and who are of the underrepresented gender (i.e., female students completing programs leading to employment in occupations nontraditional for females; and male students completing programs leading to employment in occupations nontraditional for males).

For more detailed information on the core indicator construction, consult "Perkins IV Core Indicator Cohort Definitions, Selection Methodology and Report Specifications" available at <http://www.cccco.edu/ChancellorsOffice/Divisions/EconDev/WorkPrep/CTE/CoreIndicator/tabid/492/Default.aspx>





## Identifying Special Population Students

Approximately half of those enrolled in California Community College (CCC) CTE programs are special population students. A 2004 study for the Joint Special Populations Advisory Committee found that 52% of CCC CTE students were in one or more of the following six special population groups:

- **Economically Disadvantaged Students**

These students are those who are eligible for financial aid, public need-based assistance (e.g. food stamps, general assistance, SSI/SSD), or participate in CalWORKs. They can also self-identify at the local site on registration forms or classroom surveys. Status as an economically disadvantaged student can change from year to year. Capturing the number of economically disadvantaged students in your CTE programs is critical because **your state level of CTE/Perkins funding is determined by the number of economically disadvantaged CTE students.**<sup>1</sup> Since not all economically disadvantaged students may receive financial aid or participate in state programs for economically disadvantaged students, on-site surveys of CTE students will help you get an accurate count to submit to the Chancellor's Office.

- **Limited English Proficient Students**

These students are those who have participated in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses/programs. Once students participate in ESL, they will remain designated as Limited English Proficient Students.

- **Disabled Students**

These students are those who participate in the community college Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS).

- **Single Parent Students, including Single Pregnant Women**

A single parent is an individual who is unmarried or legally separated and has custody or joint custody of a minor child or children. These students can only be identified at the local level through classroom or enrollment surveys. Single parent status can change and must be collected at least once a year and preferably every semester or term. Many of these students are also economically disadvantaged.

- **Displaced Homemaker Students**

A displaced homemaker has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income and has diminished marketable skills. Use on-site classroom or enrollment surveys to identify these students. Displaced Homemaker status can change and must be collected at least once a year and preferably every semester or term. Many of these students are also economically disadvantaged.

- **Nontraditional Students**

These students are training in areas that are nontraditional to their gender (Less than 25% of employees in the field are of a specific gender. It is not the percent of enrollment, but the percent of employment.) The Chancellor's Office can identify these students by knowing the student's gender and the program in which the student is enrolled. A list of the nontraditional programs in California is available at <http://www.cccspecialpopulations.org/resourcespublications.htm>.

## Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

### Q. How are core indicator performance goals established?

A. California must project what percentage of students will meet each core indicator. These percentages become the State's performance goals and must be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. In turn, individual colleges must establish a performance goal for each indicator with the state. Colleges may accept the level established by the state or negotiate their own level. The Perkins legislation requires that the performance goals demonstrate continuous improvement from year to year. Colleges/districts and the state are then responsible for meeting the negotiated targets.<sup>2</sup>

### Q. What happens if core indicator performance goals are not met?

A. If the state or individual colleges do not come within 90% of their negotiated target, corrective/punitive remedies take place. States and colleges that do not meet their goals are in jeopardy of losing funds.

Colleges will receive a performance rating on each core indicator and for each special population group on each indicator. When schools fall short of their goals, examining the performance of sub groups, i.e. comparing the performance of all students to each of the special population student sub-groups, will help determine where gaps in performance exist and ultimately where improvements can be made in programs.

First year sanctions mean that Perkins funds must be used to address performance gaps. If performance gaps do not diminish in subsequent years, and the school still fails to reach at least 90% of its established performance targets, additional sanctions including **partial or total loss of funding**, may be imposed.

### Q. How do you find your college's data?

A. To find your college's data visit <https://misweb.cccco.edu/perkins/main.aspx>. Click on Core Indicator Reports; the appropriate Fiscal Planning year; and Special Population Core Indicators. Next click summary by college. Enter your district and college.

### Q. How should the core indicator data be used?

A. The Perkins IV CTE legislation **requires that programs be evaluated with an emphasis on special populations**. The performance of special populations on the core indicators must be studied and reported at the local level. It is important to determine if all categories of students are having equal success.

The legislation also **requires colleges to spend funds specifically on programs that help special populations succeed in Career Technical Education**. Schools can develop plans to better serve special population students based on gaps the core indicators identify. Knowing how the various special population groups are achieving compared with other students can point to needs and suggest remedies. Once you have identified the specific barriers your special population students face, you can select strategies to address those needs.

1. See Appendix G of the 2008-2012 California State Plan for CTE for the approved criteria. The state plan is available at [http://www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/EWD/CTE/Perkins/cteplan\\_apdx\\_122808.pdf](http://www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/EWD/CTE/Perkins/cteplan_apdx_122808.pdf)

2. For more information on collecting data on special population students and establishing performance goals, consult the "Career Technical Education Resource Guide for the Carl D. Perkins Title IC Basic Grant funds" at <http://www.cccco.edu/ChancellorsOffice/Divisions/EconDevWorkPrep/CTE/tabid/415/Default.aspx>

# Strategies to Improve Performance of Special Population Students

Be sure you know what barriers your students are facing before implementing a strategy. You may benefit from reviewing best practices and proven strategies to improve performance of individual special population groups that are available at [www.cccspecialpopulations.org](http://www.cccspecialpopulations.org); [www.jspac.org](http://www.jspac.org); and [www.stemequitypipeline.org](http://www.stemequitypipeline.org). Of particular use may be the companion piece to this brief, *Make a Difference for Special Population Students: Practical Tips and Tools for Educators* that can be found on the first two websites.

The following sampling of approaches may give you an idea how you might address the needs in your setting.

## **To improve Technical Skill Attainment (Postsecondary Core 1):**

- Offer tutoring
- Provide basic skills instruction
- Organize study groups
- Provide alternative forms of instructional delivery, including group projects, flexible seating, online supplemental practice, etc.
- Ensure instructors understand the needs of special population groups

## **To improve Completion and Persistence (Postsecondary Core 2 and Postsecondary Core 3):**

- Increase awareness of financial aid
- Provide childcare
- Introduce transportation options
- Loan text books
- Provide mentors, role models, and support groups for encouragement
- Address issues of stereotype threat and self-efficacy

## **To improve Employment (Postsecondary Core 4):**

- Provide internships, job shadowing and paid work experience
- Maintain strong working relationships with advisory committees and employers
- Provide job search and development services
- Ensure that students have “soft skills” in addition to technical skills (dress, conduct, timeliness, and working well with others)

## **To improve Nontraditional Participation and Completion (Postsecondary Core 5a and 5b):**

- Offer exploratory programs targeted to underrepresented groups so they can learn about the program and find their interest and motivation
- Provide role models and mentors
- Have facilities and equipment for both women and men (e.g. locker rooms, bathrooms, various sizes of tools and safety equipment)
- Make sure every student does every task, giving equal access to all aspects of training
- Learn about your own biases and how they affect your teaching style and delivery - and your students



For more information, go to:  
California Community College Special Populations Collaborative  
[www.cccspecialpopulations.org](http://www.cccspecialpopulations.org)

To download a copy of this document, go to:  
[www.cccspecialpopulations.org](http://www.cccspecialpopulations.org)  
[www.jspac.org](http://www.jspac.org)