



Nebraska Career Education

Implementing the 2006 Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins IV)

*Secondary and Postsecondary Alignment and Student Transition
Data and Accountability
Academic and Technical Rigor
Programs of Study
Professional Development
Administration and Funding*

A Summary of Requirements and Future Plans for FY08-FY13 Implementation

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A Brief Review of Perkins III

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) will begin on July 1, 2007. This Act replaces the 1998 Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act (Perkins III). This review is provided as a source of context for how Nebraska administered the Perkins III Act. Nebraska refers to Career and Technical Education as Nebraska Career Education (NCE).

Purpose

- Perkins III outlined the purposes for the Federal legislation:
 - Further develop the academic, vocational and technical skills of vocational students through high standards
 - Link secondary and post-secondary vocational programs
 - Increase flexibility in the administration and use of federal funds
 - Disseminate national research about vocational and technical education
 - Provide professional development and technical assistance to vocational educators

Structure

- Under Perkins III there were two funding streams; the Basic Grant (Title I) and Tech Prep (Title II). Within the Basic Grant, funds were allocated to eligible recipients including secondary schools, consortia of secondary schools and Nebraska community colleges.
- The number of Basic Grant eligible 'stand-alone' Nebraska secondary schools has varied throughout the life of Perkins III. This was caused by the requirement that schools must qualify for a minimum of \$15,000 to be eligible to receive funds. Other schools formed consortia, either with their local ESU or neighboring schools to receive the funds.
- For Tech Prep, funds were awarded to the six Nebraska Community Colleges to administer. The allocation was divided by awarding 50% of the funds equally to all six colleges and the remaining 50% based on BIA and PELL grant numbers of NCE concentrators.
- Nebraska used the Reserve funds (Section 112) to provide Innovation Grants on a competitive RFP basis to promote new programs and initiatives to improve career education

Administration

- NDE serves as the eligible agency for administration of the Perkins grant and houses the NE Career Education Director and staff who act as the primary contact to the US Department of Education on issues related to ensuring the intent of Perkins legislation is met in Nebraska.

Accountability

- The Nebraska Department of Education negotiates with the USDE on performance levels on the secondary and post-secondary accountability indicators, as part of the requirement under Perkins Basic Grant (Title I).
- To ensure compliance on these negotiated performance levels, NDE is responsible for implementing mechanisms for collecting the data and producing annual reports that summarize the accountability information for inclusion in the Consolidated Annual Report (CAR) submission to the USDE.

Moving Forward Under Perkins IV

Guiding Assumptions

Perkins IV maintains much of the program improvement emphasis of Perkins III but requires Nebraska Career Education to focus on some new areas. The following *guiding assumptions* are instrumental in moving Perkins IV forward.

- **Federal Perkins IV funding for Nebraska Career Education is not an entitlement at either the state or local level.**
- **Perkins IV spending must be connected with continuous improvement and student achievement outcomes.**
- **Nebraska Career Education and academic education must be integrated in a more comprehensive way including improving the academic content of NCE courses.**
- **Nebraska Career Education must include comprehensive career guidance as a part of the school counseling program at all levels of education.**
- **The skill set needed for success in postsecondary education and for work are one and the same.**
- **NCE must be strategically placed within the broader vision, mission and goals for education within the state of Nebraska.**

Nebraska's New State Plan

The Nebraska Department of Education has prepared this report to outline the requirements and future plans for FY08-FY13. Discussions have been held with educators and administrators from secondary and postsecondary institutions, business and industry, and partners of Nebraska Career Education. The joint Forum hosted by the Nebraska Department of Education, *FutureForce Nebraska* and the Nebraska Workforce Investment Board provided great insight into the development of this report. Based on the input of hundreds of Nebraskans the following requirements and plans are in place for the Nebraska State Plan for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006.

New Perkins IV Areas of Emphasis

Perkins IV requires Nebraska and local eligible recipients to put emphasize on areas designed to result in program improvement and increased student achievement. These areas are:

- **Secondary/Postsecondary curricular alignment and improved student transition**
 - Both secondary and postsecondary are required to demonstrate alignment of courses for seamless transition between secondary and postsecondary NCE programs of study.
 - A new system of statewide articulation of secondary and postsecondary NCE courses will be developed to improve opportunities for student transition.
- **Emphasis on quality data and accountability to drive funding decisions resulting in improved student achievement and program improvement**
 - Perkins funds must be used to improve performance measures on the core indicators.
 - Data quality is improved through the development of statewide systems.
- **Increased and documented academic and technical rigor in both secondary and postsecondary Nebraska Career Education courses**
 - Academic competencies are strengthened and applied in career education courses
 - A system of technical skill attainment must be developed and implemented to respond to Perkins core indicator, but more importantly can assist in successful transition between secondary and postsecondary education and/or work.
- **Sustained professional development for secondary and postsecondary instructors and administrators**
 - Professional development must be more than a one-day workshop experience; the emphasis is on a sustained professional development program.
 - Professional development opportunities must support both secondary and postsecondary instructors and administrators and foster partnerships.
- **Programs of study must be implemented at both the secondary and postsecondary levels that meet labor market needs.**
 - Programs of study must be implemented on both the secondary and postsecondary levels that support a connection to the NCE Career Fields and Clusters model. Perkins Basic Grant (Title I) funds may be used to support the development and improvement of NCE programs of study that have been approved by NDE.

- Approved programs of study must reflect labor market needs and the high skill, high wage, and high demand requirement.
- **Changes in funding structure and use of funds to improve performance in these identified areas of emphasis**
 - Perkins IV requires the use of funds to improve performance measure data.
 - A new statewide consortium, Partners for Innovation, will be funded to address statewide issues and systems development.

Funding Structure

Beginning with the FY08 transition year (2007-2008), the funding structure has been changed from the Perkins III structure to merge the funding streams of the Basic Grant (Title I) with Tech Prep (Title II) into a single funding stream provided under the Basic Grant. The activities that had been conducted under Tech Prep are eligible expenditures under the new merged funding stream while Nebraska develops a new statewide system of articulation and secondary/postsecondary alignment. Merging the funding streams, Nebraska is no longer required to report the performance measures data of Title II of Perkins IV.

Under this funding approach, the responsibility for secondary/postsecondary curricular alignment is the responsibility of both the secondary and postsecondary recipients of Perkins IV funds.

“Partnerships for Innovation” - A New Consortium Structure

The new requirements outlined in Perkins IV require new thinking of how Nebraska can build statewide systems to accomplish program improvement and increased student achievement while meeting the requirements of Perkins IV. To assist schools and colleges to meet the requirements of Perkins IV, an approach to combine a small portion of resources collectively, to develop statewide systems has been established. The *Partnerships for Innovation* provides an opportunity to reduce the burden on local institutions to each develop their own approaches to statewide agreements, technical skill assessments, data and accountability systems, and strategic professional development approaches in isolation.

A part of Nebraska’s State Plan includes the creation of a statewide consortium to address a number of systems and processes that are required. The *Partnerships for Innovation* (PFI) consortium provides a unique mechanism to address the requirements of the new legislation collectively across the state and ultimately reduces the need for every local grant recipient to meet the intents of the law alone.

A new requirement of the local Perkins Basic Grant (Title I) application plan is allocating at least 10 % of each local eligible recipient (both secondary and postsecondary) Perkins Basic Grant funds for collaboration. This new requirement is being implemented by several states to support development of statewide systems. Minnesota and Georgia have used this requirement for several years to strengthen the improvement efforts of career education.

The following briefly describes the elements that are to be included under the new *Partnerships for Innovation (PFI)* consortium structure.

PFI Areas of Focus

- **Secondary-Postsecondary Transition**

The development of a statewide system to ensure that NCE students make the transition to further education or employment at various self-determined stop-out points along a chosen career path. Examples of this work include:

- Developing statewide articulation agreements
- Expanding opportunities for dual credit
- Develop new partnerships between secondary and postsecondary education to expand the use of distance learning and on-line courses to increase availability of career education courses to secondary students, especially in rural areas, small schools.
- Curriculum alignment of secondary and postsecondary programs of study—a requirement in Perkins IV for all secondary and postsecondary programs of study using Perkins funds
- Examining outcomes of secondary courses to ensure students are prepared to enter postsecondary education both in career education and academic preparation
- Identifying policy issues that provide barriers for successful student transition and working to overcome those barriers

- **Improved Data and Reporting Systems**

Continue the development and coordination of database and reporting systems to ease the burden and improve the quality of data required by Perkins IV and necessary for program improvement. Examples of this work include:

- Clarifying and improving data needed to respond to Perkins IV Accountability and Performance Measures—especially important in light of potential sanctions contained in Perkins IV for both state and locals that do not meet performance measure goals.
- Developing statewide systems for follow up data and management of that data
- Continued partnership with NSSRS, finding ways to eliminate duplication of data reported by eligible recipients.
- Explore ways to share data between secondary and postsecondary more effectively to reduce burden on locals.

- **Technical Skill Assessment**

Perkins IV requires a new and greater emphasis on technical skill assessment. In the past, Nebraska has been allowed to use GPA as a measure of technical skill attainment. Under Perkins IV, we will be transitioning to a new system to document technical skill attainment. The work of PFI will be instrumental in developing this new statewide system of measuring and documenting technical skill attainment.

- **Statewide Partnerships**

PFI will provide the potential for securing statewide license agreements that are determined priority need areas. Examples of this include:

- National Student Clearinghouse follow up data system, CC Benefits, Technical Skill Assessment (IT certifications, etc), Software AutoDesk and other curricular tools

- **Professional Development**

Planning and coordination of professional development that may include skill training in emerging areas, technical skill development, and training in new instructional strategies and approaches for secondary and postsecondary instructors. Areas of teacher recruitment, certification, and other areas related to instruction are opportunities for planning, coordination, and exploration.

- **Curriculum in Emerging Areas**

Development of secondary/postsecondary aligned curriculum in new and emerging, or targeted areas

The *Partnerships for Innovation* (PFI) consortia is focused on building systems and capacity for Nebraska to meet the demands of the legislation, but more importantly to increase the flexibility in prioritizing decisions made locally by reducing the administrative on the local education agencies.

PFI Investment

During the initial start up stages of PFI, a 10 % investment of the local allocation is provided to the *Partnerships for Innovation* (PFI) consortia. The fiduciary agent is *FutureForce Nebraska*, operating under the requirements and processes of the Nebraska Community Foundation. *FutureForce Nebraska* does not control the allocation or use of the funds; they are simply serving as the fiscal agent.

PFI Management

A Leadership Council of local Perkins recipients will manage PFI. The Leadership Council will consist of one representative from each of the six Nebraska Community Colleges and six representatives from secondary schools or consortia. This Leadership Council will set the annual budget, identify funding priorities, evaluation criteria, and track progress.

Specific Task Forces will be appointed to work on specific priorities of the PFI. These may include: Data and Accountability, Secondary/Postsecondary Transition, Professional Development, etc. Again, membership on these task forces will be provided for secondary and postsecondary eligible recipients and partners.

Coordination of PFI Priorities and Activities

Where possible, PFI will seek to leverage resources and effectiveness with *FutureForce Nebraska*, the P-16 Initiative, Nebraska Workforce Investment Board, workforce development and economic development initiatives.

The Work of PFI

After the priorities and activities for the year are identified, contracts or grants may be let through an RFP process to Perkins eligible recipients that can lead and/or facilitate the work.

The Decision to Require PFI participation

After several months of gathering input, an invitation was extended to Perkins Grant Administrators to meet on June 6, 2007 at the Nebraska Career Education Conference to provide input into the new state plan. During the discussion, it was determined the work of PFI is so vital to the success of Nebraska Career Education and the implementation of Perkins IV, that participation should be mandatory.

Essential Components (formerly known as program standards)

Local eligible recipients must verify that the essential components are in place to qualify for Perkins IV funding. This will be at the building level for high schools and college level for community colleges. This list will be finalized by the Perkins Grant Administrators during the transition year and included in the State Plan to be submitted spring 2008.

Example listing of essential components for eligibility:

- ▶ Identified programs of study
- ▶ Appropriately qualified instructors
- ▶ Appropriate assessments including technical skill attainment
- ▶ Alignment to industry standards
- ▶ Appropriate equipment/facilities
- ▶ Curricular alignment/articulation (secondary to postsecondary and postsecondary to secondary)
- ▶ Opportunity for student leadership development (Career Student Organization or other)
- ▶ Opportunity for work-based learning experience

Programs of Study

During the transition year, guidance will be provided to local eligible recipients at both the secondary and postsecondary level to assist in identifying programs of study that will be approved for Perkins IV funding. A set of model programs of study will be provided by NDE based upon national models. Local eligible recipients will provide a list of the program of study offerings to be approved for Perkins funds by NDE.

Requirements of approved programs of study are:

- ▶ an equivalent of three (3) sequential semester NCE courses in a career cluster or pathway
- ▶ course(s) must be articulated between secondary and postsecondary (secondary to postsecondary and postsecondary to secondary)
- ▶ must address labor market and economic development needs
- ▶ must be a part of a sequence of academic and career education courses that lead to a certificate, certification, diploma, or a degree

Uses of Perkins IV Funds

During the transition year, further guidance will be issued on the use of Perkins IV funds. This legislation is quite clear that funds are to be used to improved career education and student achievement, not to maintain current operations.

Funding and Administration

Transition Year (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008)

The transition plan for eligible recipients will be due July 30, 2007. The Nebraska Department of Education Grants Management System will be utilized to submit the transition year plan. The first activity of the transition plan should reflect participation in the Partnerships for Innovation consortium. Sample wording is provided in the Perkins IV Frequently Asked Questions guidance.

New Local Consortium Formation Timeline

In the FY08 transition year (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008), the consortium structure utilized under FY07 will be maintained. During the transition year, the requirements of local consortia will be reviewed and new guidelines for consortium formation will be issued. With the expanded requirements of Perkins IV, the number of consortia will be evaluated along with the capacity to meet the requirements outlined in the new law. The state reserves the right to negotiate the final consortium structure so that no district or college is excluded, and the requirements of Perkins IV will be met.

Development of New Local (5) Five Year Strategic Plan

During the transition year, guidance will be issued to eligible recipients on the development of the new local five year plan. This plan will provide the vision for the use of Perkins funds resulting in the improvement of Nebraska Career Education and student achievement. The five-year plan will be submitted using the NDE Grants Management System and will be due prior to July 1, 2008.

Local Annual Application Elements

Starting in FY09, (July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009) and thereafter, a local annual application will be developed that addresses the intent and requirements of Perkins IV by identifying the activities of the initial 5 year plan to be conducted during the program year. Adjustments to the five year plan are made during the annual application for use of funds.

The state will promote a local planning process that places the focus on broad goals of program improvement/student achievement and accountability measures rather than required and permissive activities, as is the case under Perkins III. Within the annual application, however, each required activity as specified in the State Plan will need to be addressed.

At a minimum, each local annual application will address the following:

- How NCE programs of study will be developed, expanded and promoted.
- How technical skill attainment will be measured separately from graduation outcomes.
- How high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand occupations will be aligned with programs of study.
- How secondary and post-secondary recipients of Perkins IV funds will be used to help meet accountability measures.

Accountability

Secondary and post-secondary recipients of Perkins funds will be responsible for meeting accountability performance measures under Perkins IV. For the FY09 local application plan, and for each successive plan (FY10-FY13), the state will promote modifications to the local planning

process that place the focus on broad goals rather than specific required and permissive activities. While the state is still awaiting specific guidelines and regulations regarding Perkins IV accountability definitions, measures and performance targets, it is clear, in collaboration with the state, that each secondary school district/consortium or college must negotiate individual performance targets and develop an accountability plan to ensure that performance targets are met.

Timelines under Perkins IV

The table below shows the timeline on various Perkins IV federal, state and local requirements. Once the instructions about the FY08 local application plan development are given to high schools and colleges and the state transition plan is submitted to the US Department of Education, a **Five-Year Perkins State Plan** must be developed (by April 16, 2008) that makes precise, public and definitive all issues related to program, accountability, administration and funding. To effectively publicize the changes that are being required under Perkins IV, multiple approaches need to be implemented:

Timelines Regarding Local Application Plan Development

- A key joint effort should be made by both senior college and secondary school administration to involve stakeholders in discussions about operationalizing the new PFI consortium structure.
- The FY08 (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008) local transition application plan will be due by June 30, 2007.
- The NCE web site (<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/NCE/>) will be updated continuously to include FAQs (frequently asked questions) and updates on federal, state, and system requirements in developing the FY08 local application plan.
- Formal correspondence regarding Perkins federal, state and system requirements will be disseminated and posted on the web site (<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/NCE/>).
- Approval of FY08 local application plans will be completed in July 2007.
- Structured discussions about the FY09 NCE local planning and the new PFI consortium structure must occur early in FY08.

Perkins IV Timeline

April 16, 2007	State Transition Plan Submitted to US Dept. of Education
June 6, 2007	Input gathered during Nebraska Career Education Conference on State Plan development
June 30, 2007	<i>Local Plans Due for transition year</i>
???	Federal regulations expected for FY08 that may require local plan adjustments
July 1, 2007	Local and State Implementation under Transition Plan
July, 2007	Develop technical assistance as necessary for local recipients of Perkins funds
October, 2007	Perkins Local Consortium Structure Determined
December, 2007	Draft 5-year State Plan complete
January, 2008	State Plan submitted for State Board of Education review
January-February 2008	Meetings for Secondary and Postsecondary Perkins Administrators for FY09 local plan development, accountability and administration based on the new consortium structure
February 2008	Public Hearings
March, 2008	State Plan approved by State Board of Education
March 16, 2008	State to federal negotiations completed for core indicators of performance (<i>tentative</i>)
April 16, 2008	Five-Year State Plan Due to US Dept. of Education
May, 2008	Local Negotiations for 5-year Performance Indicators
June 15, 2008	<i>Local Plans Due (tentative)</i>
July 1, 2008	Begin Implementation under 5-year State Plan