The Office of Career, Adult, and Technical Education (OCTAE) provides technical assistance (TA) each year to state and local career and technical education (CTE) leaders through the TA to States initiative. The TA helps states meet accountability requirements under the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) and supports state and local CTE providers in using data to improve student and program outcomes.

Between October 2020 and May 2021, researchers at RTI International (“the TA team”) explored the following TA topics with Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College (NHSC) staff:

• How can NHSC ensure meaningful input from all relevant stakeholders during the community needs assessment process?
• How can NHSC ensure that CTE programs reflect community needs (especially labor market needs)?

RTI worked with Iman Moore, Native American Career and Technical Education Program (NACTEP) Project Director; Susan McNeil, Director of CTE; and Elissa Argent, NACTEP Completion Coach; during the project.
To address NHSC’s questions, the TA team

- reviewed national guidance on conducting effective comprehensive local needs assessments (CLNAs) from organizations including Advance CTE, the Association for Career and Technical Education (a), and the Council of Chief State School Officers;
- reviewed state practices in Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, and Washington State; and
- identified and reviewed sources of publicly available labor market data from North Dakota and the U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau.

This **Strategic Plan for Stakeholder Engagement** provides a series of action steps that NHSC can take to identify and recruit leaders to assist in the CLNA process, develop targeted outreach strategies to gain meaningful stakeholder feedback, and analyze and incorporate stakeholder feedback.

The appendices include tools and workbooks for stakeholder engagement and recommendations on accessing and leveraging state and federal labor market data during the CLNA process.
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

PHASE 1
Identify a leadership team

ACTIVITY
The project lead will identify and recruit education and community leaders to drive the community needs assessment process

OUTCOME
Leadership team assembled to drive stakeholder outreach efforts and recruit key stakeholder groups

PHASE 2
Identify key stakeholder groups

ACTIVITY
The leadership team will identify stakeholder groups whose input is needed to assess community needs

OUTCOME
A list of stakeholder groups and outreach topics relevant to each group

PHASE 3
Implement targeted communication strategies

ACTIVITY
The leadership team will identify targeted communication strategies for each stakeholder group

OUTCOME
A matrix of communication strategies targeted to stakeholder groups

PHASE 4
Collect stakeholder feedback

ACTIVITY
The leadership team will use targeted communication strategies to gather stakeholder feedback

OUTCOME
Documentation of stakeholder outreach efforts, a summary of feedback received, and lessons learned
What does a leadership team do?

The leadership team plays a crucial role in the development of the CLNA, including:

- REVIEWING EXISTING DATA (e.g., labor market data);
- ASSISTING WITH STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH by helping to identify stakeholders, priority topics, and outreach methods and leveraging relationships with the community and stakeholder groups to recruit and gather feedback from community stakeholders; and
- DRAFTING AND REVIEWING THE COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT following the stakeholder outreach period.

For an overview of leadership team member responsibilities during each phase of the stakeholder engagement plan, see the appendix.

The appendix also includes some additional factors to consider when recruiting leadership team members and suggestions on who to recruit.
STEP 1.1 Select team members

Select a small but representative group of CTE stakeholders to recruit for membership on the leadership team, based on

- **INSIGHT OR EXPERTISE** on required community needs assessment components (see text box at right);

- **ACCESS TO COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS** through existing professional or personal relationships, community organizations, or other relationships;

- **MOTIVATION**, or a personal or professional stake in helping to improve CTE; and

- **REPRESENTATION** of a wide range of community stakeholder groups and interests.

**Required CLNA Components**

- Student performance
- CTE program requirements and standards
- CTE program alignment to labor market needs
- CTE program alignment to community needs
- CTE programs of study implementation
- Instructor recruitment, retention, and training strategies
- CTE equity and access

**PRODUCT 1.1**

Short list of prospective team members
STEP 1.2 Recruit leadership team

Reach out to education and community leaders to recruit them for the community needs assessment leadership team. During recruitment, describe

- EXPECTED LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION, or how often they will be expected to attend leadership team meetings, types of outreach and stakeholder engagement activities they will participate in, and a timeline of community needs assessment activities (see the Leadership Team Roles and Responsibilities Matrix in the appendix for more detail);

- CHALLENGES you hope to address in the next community needs assessment and next round of Perkins funding; and

- YOUR VISION or GOALS for the needs assessment process.

PRODUCT 1.2
Leadership team
STEP 2.1 List key stakeholder groups

Collaborate with team members to develop a list of key stakeholder groups whose input you would like to include in the community needs assessment.

Review the preliminary list of stakeholders and stakeholder groups to ensure that it represents both

- REQUIRED STAKEHOLDER GROUPS, identified under Perkins V §134(d) (see text box); and

- RELEVANT STAKEHOLDER GROUPS, based on the unique needs and context of the Fort Berthold Reservation community. Consider whether there are other stakeholder groups who are not represented on the leadership team and whose input is critical to identifying community needs.

PRODUCT 2.1
A preliminary list of key stakeholders and stakeholders groups
STEP 2.1 List key stakeholder groups, continued

Set a meeting to discuss the stakeholders / stakeholder groups to whom you plan to reach out.

Before the meeting

- distribute the Stakeholder Recruitment Roster to team members, and
- ask leadership team members to complete the roster.

During the meeting

- combine individual stakeholder recruitment rosters into a master list of stakeholders and stakeholder groups.

PRODUCT 2.1

A list of key stakeholders and stakeholders groups
STEP 3.1 Identify priority topics and questions for stakeholder feedback

The leadership team should identify and list topics on which they plan to seek community input. At minimum, these topics should cover the required CLNA components listed in Step 1.1. However, topics should also invite feedback on:

- STRATEGIC PRIORITIES identified by the leadership team through initial review of labor market information (see appendix), consultation with education providers, etc.;
- COMMUNITY NEEDS AND CHALLENGES, whether local or global in scope (e.g., COVID-19); and
- OTHER NEEDS AND PRIORITIES identified by stakeholders.

Use the Required Topics and Strategic Priorities for Stakeholder Input table to document required and priority outreach topics and provide a brief description of each.

PRODUCT 3.1
A list of priority topics and questions for stakeholder feedback
STEP 3.2 Map priority topics to stakeholders and stakeholder groups

The leadership team should consider which stakeholders or stakeholder groups are best positioned to weigh in on the topics the team has prioritized. Consider the following:

- MOTIVATION, or personal or professional stake in a given topic
- EXPERTISE OR EXPERIENCE relevant to a given topics

Use the Stakeholder Communication Strategies table to map priority topics for stakeholder input to each stakeholder group.

Once you have identified and mapped priority topics to stakeholders and stakeholder groups, revisit Step 2.1 to make sure you have included all stakeholders you need to weigh in on your priority topics.

PRODUCT 3.2

A list of outreach topics targeted to each stakeholder group
STEP 3.3  Identify the best outreach strategies for each group

The communication preferences of stakeholders and stakeholder groups can vary. Consider the methods at right for contacting stakeholders.

Use the Stakeholder Communication Strategies table to identify primary and secondary outreach strategies for each stakeholder group.

Consider convening a meeting to gather stakeholders in the community to discuss the community needs assessment.

PRODUCT 3.3
Primary and secondary outreach strategies for each stakeholder group
STEP 3.3a Identify existing outreach efforts that could be leveraged for the CLNA

Identify and tap into existing communication strategies to avoid sending multiple requests and leverage the outreach work those organizations are already doing. Use your leadership team to identify opportunities relevant to their roles in the community, including:

- **STUDENT SURVEYS** and other communications,
- **BUSINESS SURVEYS** or **TRIBAL COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS**, and
- **MANDAN, HIDATSA, and ARIKARA NATION EVENTS**.

**PRODUCT 3.3a**

Primary and secondary outreach strategies for each stakeholder group
**PHASE 4**  
**COLLECT STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK (SLIDE 1)**

**STEP 4.1** Develop a question list for each topic identified in Step 3.1

Tailor the list of questions to the outreach method:

- If you are requesting written responses, keep the question list short and focused on a specific topic.
- If you want to cover a broader range of topics, consider using a survey with multiple choice or short responses.
- For more detailed responses, consider using focus groups, roundtable discussions, or other open discussion formats.

To reduce the time and effort required to develop questions for specific stakeholder groups, develop a master list of questions that you can customize for specific groups. For suggestions on questions to include in stakeholder outreach, see [this resource from ACTE](#).

**PRODUCT 4.1**

List of questions for stakeholders
STEP 4.2 Reach out to and/or convene stakeholders

Reach out to stakeholders and stakeholder groups using the methods you identified in Step 3.3. In your initial communications to stakeholders, be sure to include

- A SHORT EXPLANATION of why you are reaching out and why their input is important,
- A TIMELINE of when you need their responses, and
- AN INVITATION to follow up with you if they have any questions.

Follow up at regular intervals as needed if stakeholders are slow to respond.
STEP 4.3  Track responses and gather feedback

As stakeholders respond to your requests for input and feedback, track responses and collect feedback.

Consolidate feedback as much as possible in one or two locations.

- Data collection is relatively simple with online surveys.

- For responses through other media, use the Stakeholder Response Tracking Sheet to collect or summarize stakeholder feedback in one place.
STEP 4.4 Review and summarize feedback

Review stakeholder feedback with your leadership team. Identify and document potential changes to your CTE plan or strategies in response to stakeholder feedback. Include

- A summary of COMMON THEMES identified in stakeholder input,
- A summary of OUTREACH EFFORTS, whether those efforts were successful, and LESSONS LEARNED for future stakeholder outreach sessions and REVISIONS to the CLNA.

PRODUCT 4.4
Summary of stakeholder feedback and lessons learned
APPENDICES

Contents

• Leadership team roles and responsibilities matrix
• Factors and strategies to consider when recruiting the leadership team
• Stakeholder engagement tools and resources
• Recommendations on labor market information data sources and analysis strategies
• How to access occupational projections from Job Service North Dakota
• How to access American Community Survey data for the Fort Berthold Reservation
• References and additional resources
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership team member roles</th>
<th>Phase 2: Identify key stakeholder groups</th>
<th>Phase 3: Implement targeted communication strategies</th>
<th>Phase 4: Collect stakeholder feedback</th>
<th>After the stakeholder engagement process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary data review</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Review data that are readily available through existing sources (e.g., student performance data, labor market data)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder recruitment</td>
<td>Fill in stakeholder recruitment roster</td>
<td>Based on data review, identify priority topics and research questions to address through stakeholder outreach (see discussion for Step 3.1)</td>
<td>Develop discussion questions, surveys, and other stakeholder outreach tools tailored to your chosen outreach methods (see discussion for Step 3.3)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder feedback review and analysis</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Review stakeholder input in preparation for CLNA leadership team meetings, assist in identifying themes and drafting summary of stakeholder feedback</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft and review CLNA narrative</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Assist in drafting and reviewing CLNA narrative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX Choosing the Leadership Team

Factors and strategies to consider when recruiting leadership team

1. Connection to stakeholder groups NHSC needs to consult (see the list of groups required for consultation in Step 2.1)

2. Engagement and level of investment in education and workforce development (consider individuals with a personal or professional interest in workforce development, ensuring equitable access to CTE programs, etc.)

3. Ability and willingness to commit to regular meetings and assist in stakeholder outreach and drafting the CLNA and local applications

4. Existing councils or advisory groups that could contribute members or assist in stakeholder outreach through existing channels or outreach efforts

Potential leadership team members

- Postsecondary institution representatives
  - Presidents/superintendents
  - Vice presidents, deans
  - Fiscal officers
  - CTE faculty and instructors
  - Career advisors/counselors
- Business and industry representatives
  - Local business representatives
  - Tribal Council members or committee members
- Community partners
- Secondary administrators or faculty
- Representatives of special populations
- Students or student organizations
## APPENDIX  Stakeholder Engagement Tools and Resources (slide 1)

### Stakeholder Recruitment Roster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder or stakeholder group</th>
<th>Representation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Include the names of specific stakeholders or stakeholder groups in this column.</td>
<td>Note the groups or institutions each stakeholder represents: Secondary or Postsecondary CTE, Workforce Development or Economic Development Board, Parents/Students, Special Populations, Representatives of Indian Tribes or Tribal Organizations, Other Groups Required Under State Law, Other Groups.</td>
<td>Provide a brief description of the rationale for including the stakeholder group. This could be related to required community needs assessment components or other considerations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These tools were also provided in Excel format with this strategic plan.
### Required Topics and Strategic Priorities for Stakeholder Input

**Topic**

At minimum, topics should include the following: student performance, CTE program requirements and standards, alignment to labor market needs, alignment to community needs, and progress toward implementation; instructor recruitment, retention, and training strategies; and CTE equity and access.

---

*Note: These tools were also provided in Excel format with this strategic plan.*
## Stakeholder Communication Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder or stakeholder group</th>
<th>Topics for input</th>
<th>Outreach method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Include the names of specific stakeholders or stakeholder groups in this column.</td>
<td>(Include topics identified in the previous table: “Required Topics and Strategic Priorities for Stakeholder Input”)</td>
<td>In consultation with the leadership team, identify the best method to reach each stakeholder group, as well as two to three alternative methods.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These tools were also provided in Excel format with this strategic plan.
## APPENDIX Stakeholder Engagement Tools and Resources (slide 4)

### Stakeholder Response Tracking Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder or stakeholder group</th>
<th>Outreach method</th>
<th>Response status</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meetings, focus groups, surveys, advisory board, interviews, etc.</td>
<td>Whether the stakeholder has responded, date of response</td>
<td>Include the feedback, a summary of the feedback, or location where the feedback can be read in full.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These tools were also provided in Excel format with this strategic plan.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Insights.ND.Gov: Job openings*</th>
<th>Job Service North Dakota LMI website**</th>
<th>American Community Survey (ACS) Data***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the source include historical or projected employment data?</td>
<td>Historical (through 2021)</td>
<td>Projected (2 year and 10 year)</td>
<td>Historical (through 2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are occupations or job openings categorized?</td>
<td>By occupation (Standard Occupational Classification system code)</td>
<td>By occupation group (ACS Occupational Classifications)</td>
<td>By occupation group (ACS Occupational Classifications)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For which geographic area(s) are data available?</td>
<td>State, region, and county</td>
<td>State and planning region</td>
<td>State, county, and Fort Berthold Reservation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Job openings data are available at [Insights of North Dakota](#) under the “Explore Workforce” tab.

**See the following slides for a description of how to access state and regional occupational projections from North Dakota Job Service.

***See the following slides for a description of how to access ACS data for the Fort Berthold Reservation.
APPENDIX  Suggestions and Considerations for Reviewing Labor Market Data

• Use multiple data sources for a preliminary assessment of job prospects.
  ▪ North Dakota–provided data are more up-to-date than ACS data but are not available at the reservation level.
  ▪ ACS data are not as up-to-date but are available at the reservation level.

• Possible strategy:
  1. Use ACS data to identify historically in-demand occupations on the reservation.
  2. Use Job Service North Dakota site to assess employment prospects for those occupations at the state and regional level.
  3. Present these data to leadership and stakeholder groups as a starting point for discussion. Use stakeholder feedback (notably, from business and industry stakeholders) to identify priority occupations for the reservation community.
APPENDIX  Accessing Occupational Projections from North Dakota Job Service (slide 1)

1. Travel to the Job Service North Dakota LMI page.

2. Locate and click on the “Long-term Employment Projections” thumbnail (circled at right).
3. Select an option to view Industry and Occupation Projections.
   • Click “Reports” to download PDF reports.
   • (Recommended) Click “Dataset” to download an Excel file with detailed industry and occupational projections.
   • Click “Analyzer” to explore online tables and charts of occupational projections by Occupational Area.
APPENDIX

Accessing ACS Occupations Data for the Fort Berthold Reservation (slide 1)

1. Travel to the Census Data Explorer web page and click on “View Tables.”

2. Click on “Filter” on the left-hand menu.
Accessing ACS Occupations Data for the Fort Berthold Reservation (slide 2)

3a. Under “Browse Filters,” click “Geography.” Scroll down and click “American Indian Area/Alaska Native Area (Reservation or Statistical Entity Only).” Then scroll down the resulting list and click on “Fort Berthold Reservation, ND.” Check the box for Fort Berthold Reservation.
Accessing ACSOccupations Data for the Fort Berthold Reservation (slide 3)

3a. At this point, you should see a green oval with “Fort Berthold Reservation, ND; Fort Berthold...” under the search bar.
3b. Now, click on “Filter” again. Under “Browse Filters” click on “Topics.” In the “Topics” submenu, click on “Employment.” In the “Employment” submenu, click on “Occupation.”
Accessing ACS Occupations Data for the Fort Berthold Reservation (slide 5)

4. Click on one of the tables in the left-hand panel to view historical occupations data for the Fort Berthold Reservation (example below includes estimates of Median Earnings by ACS Occupation Area from the 2015–19 ACS).
APPENDIX

References and Resources (slide 1)

- **The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act**
  - Lays out community needs assessment and stakeholder engagement requirements at §134 (c) and (d)
- **Missouri Perkins V CLNA Guidance Document**
  - Includes guidance for stakeholder engagement and CLNA worksheets
- **Texas Perkins V CLNA Instructions**
  - Includes a stakeholder engagement strategy and action plan
- **Texas Perkins V CLNA Stakeholder Checklist**
  - Stakeholder engagement tracking sheet
- **Advance CTE - Planning for Engagement: Identifying Key Stakeholders for Perkins V**
  - Details requirements, strategies, and resource links for stakeholder engagement
- **Stakeholders and Perkins V: Meaningful Engagement for Student Success**
  - Includes stakeholder engagement checklist and best practices for securing and sustaining engagement
- **Perkins V Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment: Washington State Guidelines and Resources**
  - (Download link) Includes recommendations on identifying leadership team members and leveraging their input in the CLNA process. See also [Washington State’s CLNA template](download link).
APPENDIX

References and Resources (slide 2)

• **California Community Colleges: Key Questions to Ask During CLNA Development Process**
  ▪ Lists of questions to consider in assessing student performance and program quality

• **Ohio’s Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment Guidebook**
  ▪ Provides overview of CLNA process, including how to select leadership team and the team’s role during and after the stakeholder engagement process. See also [Ohio’s Local Needs Assessment Application Template](#).