Technical Assistance to Vermont

2020–2021
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RTI International
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Background

• In 2020–21, the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) received support from RTI International through the National Perkins Reporting System: Technical Assistance to States Program

• As part of this support, RTI conducted the following activities:
  • Held meetings and workshops with AOE staff to understand their needs, determine a path for support, and review findings
  • Provided example templates, tools, and guidance from other states
  • Facilitated discussion between AOE staff and North Carolina state CTE staff
  • Conducted interviews with four Vermont technical centers and state CTE staff in five states
Key Questions

**CLNA**
- What guidance and resources do states provide for comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA) development, collaboration, and stakeholder engagement?
- How do states approach the postsecondary CLNA?

**Data**
- What state strategies support student-centered approaches to planning and data use among local education agencies (LEAs)?
- How do states support local data ownership and use?

**Special Populations**
- What strategies can improve the validity of special population indicator data, such as homelessness?
- At the postsecondary level, what are innovative strategies to identify special populations?
Roadmap for Technical Assistance

Explore
- Understand Vermont’s needs and concerns
- Examine practices in other states
- Select comparable states

Activities: Share and read materials from other states

Learn
- Understand promising state and local strategies
- Identify options for improvement
- Talk with technical center staff about their approaches to data use

Activities: Speak with state and local leaders about promising practices and reflect on best strategies

Create
- Identify ideas for CLNA support and guidance documents
- Share example CLNA resources and templates
- Provide a summary of local staff data needs and strategies
- Outline recommended actions to support special populations identification

Activities: Review deliverables and discuss implications
Recommendations for Vermont

• Bring consistency and collaboration to the CLNA process by
  • identifying priority data points for each CLNA section,
  • sharing examples of CLNA sections for centers to use as guides when developing their own CLNAs, and
  • providing templates to collect student or stakeholder feedback.

• Encourage the use of data for program improvement by
  • providing training on data-centered frameworks, lenses, and tools to use in data analysis;
  • supporting formal opportunities to share data strategies, resources, and best practices across centers; and
  • reducing the burden to data access for local staff through strategies such as streamlined labor market information access and integrated data systems.

• Improve the quality of data collection on special populations by
  • creating definitions for all postsecondary institutions to adopt, and
  • collaborating with local experts for each subpopulation to help with identification and validation.
CLNA

The following slides describe three categories of state support related to CLNA development:

I. Using the CLNA to encourage LEAs to make program decisions based on data

II. Supporting the local CLNA process

III. Encouraging data and stakeholder-driven decisions
CLNA: Using the CLNA to Encourage LEAs to Make Program Decisions Based on Data
CLNA templates and tools can help LEAs leverage data to move from insights to strategies.

- Gather data
- Analyze & ask questions
- Identify gaps & goals
- Brainstorm strategies
Georgia’s alignment toolkit emphasizes thinking critically about all programs, including existing programs, when exploring data and setting goals.
Maryland uses a color-coded scheme in graphics to highlight subgroup disparities shown in numeric tables.
Illinois’s postsecondary template includes questions to move from data on subgroup gaps to strategies for closing gaps.

What equity gaps were identified for students in CTE programs for high-demand sectors?

- More specifically, what racial equity gaps were identified for students in CTE programs for high-demand sectors?

Based on the equity gaps you identified, what CTE programs should you prioritize to develop structures, supports, and practices that improve student performance and outcomes?

What are some of the root causes for the equity and racial equity gaps you identified in your CTE programs? [Please identify how institutional structures, systems, resources, and practices are the root cause and refrain from focusing on perceived student deficits as the cause.]
Ohio’s template asks LEAs to outline their current status, future goals, and strategies to achieve each goal for each question within CLNA elements. LEAs must also answer equity-focused questions and identify priority strategies for each element.
Colorado’s template is similar, adding on a request for evidence and rating of its current status.
Massachusetts asks LEAs to create data-driven and data-measurable goals. LEAs must provide details to make each goal “SMART”: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time based.
CLNA timeline alignment with the local application can also have implications for what factors LEAs consider in the planning process.

**Submission prior to local application**
(California, Kansas, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Virginia)
- Focuses on identifying needs before considering funding priorities
- Allows for a regional submission and approval process separate from or instead of the state review

**Submission at the same time as local application**
(Alabama, Georgia, Montana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee)
- Coordinates directly with preparation and submission of the local application (as a separate submission or as part of the same application)
- State approval of plans in the CLNA and local application are simultaneous

**Submission after local application**
(Illinois)
- Focuses on aligning the elements of pre-approved programs of study with local needs
In Ohio, the CLNA is integrated with the local application. The application requires that each funding allocation be aligned with a CLNA goal and strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Summary of Priorities</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Required Uses of Funds and Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part A: Evaluation of Student Performance</strong></td>
<td>Copy &quot;Summary of Priorities&quot; from Tab Part A</td>
<td>Pull at least one, but no more than two goals from Tab Part A</td>
<td>Strategies are action steps designed to implement each Goal; thus please align each strategy to a specific goal (see numbering example below).</td>
<td>Uses of funds are clearly aligned with a specific strategy (code with the strategy number). If there are three strategies being funded, Strategy A, Strategy B and Strategy C... have budget numbers for each, and label them as such. Funds must be allowable/required uses - please code according to &quot;Required Uses of Funds&quot; tab: see example below of Part B-1.</td>
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**Must Cover: Student performance gaps among subgroups and how those gaps will be addressed**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Part B-1. Size, Scope and Quality</strong></th>
<th>Copy &quot;Summary of Priorities&quot; from Tab Part B-1</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
<th>EX AMPLE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Must Cover: Work-based learning opportunities. Please also include a breakdown of programs and courses offered.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. To develop a new &quot;Blue Widgets&quot; fabrication program with a 30 participants per year capacity at East Tech High School by September 1, 2021.</td>
<td>1A: Develop &quot;Blue Widget&quot; curriculum for P.O.S.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2. Bring &quot;Red Bike&quot; pathway into compliance with state Quality Program standards by June 30, 2022.</td>
<td>1B: $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2A: Provide PD to educators in &quot;Red Bikes&quot; pathway</td>
<td>1C: $55,000 (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2B: Update Red Bike curricula to reflect new &quot;Red Bike&quot; technology</td>
<td>1D: $18,000 (2C)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2A: $12,000 (2C)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>2B: $5,000 (5A)</td>
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CLNA: Supporting the Local CLNA Process
Create Guidance Documents and Toolkits

- Application template
- Data analysis template
- Assessment completion guide or instructions
- Submission process, timeline, or checklist
- Recorded technical assistance webinars
- Stakeholder engagement toolkit (organizations, outreach text template)
- Stakeholder meeting toolkit (worksheets, meeting agendas)
- Archived stakeholder meeting notes
- Review criteria
- Data sources

Ohio developed a series of resources, accompanied by recorded conference calls on CLNA Q&A
Oregon provides tools to center student data in the CLNA process through equity and transition lenses.
Actively Foster Collaboration

- One-third of states explicitly require or encourage collaboration *above and beyond* the minimum stakeholder engagement requirements of *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* (Perkins V).
- Advance CTE offers ideas for the state’s role in fostering collaboration:
  - Share communication on the purpose
  - Develop guidance on who and how to engage as well as how often
  - Provide contact lists
  - Incentivize collaboration

*Source: Advance CTE Perkins V State plan summary report draft*
The Texas Higher Education Board specifies the postsecondary staff roles that should be involved in the CLNA process.

I. Composing the CLNA Task Force

The CLNA Task Force should be composed of individuals who have the ability and opportunity to work together closely on CLNA planning and execution over a concentrated period of time. Members should primarily be institutionally affiliated. A chair or co-chairs should be appointed to organize and facilitate Task Force meetings, oversee Task Force activities and make sure the CLNA process proceeds smoothly. The Task Force’s suggested size is 8 to 12 members. The following list is a suggested guideline for putting together a CLNA Task Force.

- Vice Chancellor or Vice President for Workforce
- CTE Deans
- CTE Department or Division Heads
- CTE Faculty
- Member(s) of the institution’s Industry Advisory Boards
- Representative(s) of local Workforce Development Board
- CTE student representative(s)
CLNA: Encouraging Data and Stakeholder-driven Decisions
Data Reports to Guide CLNA Conversations

CTE performance data report with trends and visuals
(California, Illinois, Maryland, Ohio)

Crosswalk between a provided data report and the CLNA sections
(California, Ohio)

CLNA template with prepopulated data
(Delaware)
Incorporate Stakeholder Feedback (slide 1)

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) outlines steps to incorporate asynchronous stakeholder feedback into state planning:

1. **Read** all meeting notes, survey responses, and feedback.
2. **Categorize** comments to identify key themes.
3. Look for **areas of agreement** across stakeholder groups.
4. **Connect** suggestions to the stakeholders who made them to show their voices were heard.
5. **Document** where suggestions were used and why suggestions were not incorporated.
6. **Share!**
Incorporate Stakeholder Feedback (slide 2)

Example questions suggested by CCSSO:

• Are the proposed ideas allowed under Perkins V?
  • If yes, would they require any changes in local policies or programs?
  • If not, are proposed ideas promising ones? How could they be addressed in another way?

• How are you categorizing feedback so you can reference it in the CLNA?

• Does stakeholder feedback confirm any assumptions made in the CLNA? Are there any perspectives that conflict with assumptions?

• How would the ideas accelerate or slow down progress toward goals overall and for subpopulations?
Promoting Data Ownership and Data-driven Decision Making

- Improve understanding of data
  - Statewide strategic plan for data literacy (Oregon)
  - Annual trainings (Massachusetts, North Carolina)
  - Guidance and technical assistance (Florida, Maryland)

- Improve ability to analyze data
  - Develop practitioner-oriented dashboards (Alaska, Colorado)
  - Data office hours (North Carolina, Wisconsin)
  - Tools and resources addressing specific aspects of data use (Massachusetts, North Carolina)

**Spotlight on Maryland CTE:**
State staff offered a webinar to teach staff and community members how to use the CTE data dashboard. They also developed Data Detective activities and video tutorials as a hands-on opportunity for users to learn how to navigate and interpret elements of the dashboard.
Strategy Spotlight: North Carolina Secondary CTE (slide 1)

• Annual weeklong CTE data conference

• Local CTE Directors complete two yearlong stages of data training:
  • Level 1: *Perkins V* indicators, their meaning, and how to identify and address performance gaps
  • Level 2: How to use data for programmatic decisions and to communicate with stakeholders

• Team of nine regional staff support CTE implementation and data collection through means such as professional development
Strategy Spotlight: North Carolina Secondary CTE (slide 2)

Data-focused networking

- Regional mentors
- Monthly coffee chats
- Collaboration stations
Strategy Spotlight: North Carolina Secondary CTE (slide 3)

• Promising Practices
  ✓ Leverage data-focused networking to communicate data questions and needs.
  ✓ Offer virtual trainings to allow cross-region collaboration and increase number of staff who may participate.
  ✓ Include professional development into criteria for risk-based monitoring to encourage participation in trainings.
Providing Data Analysis Tools

• **Root cause analysis** is commonly encouraged through training and guidance.

• States leverage tools developed for other initiatives (e.g., *Every Student Succeeds Act*, school improvement).
  • **Massachusetts** created data analysis tools to schools needing improvement assistance and makes them available for the *Perkins V CLNAs*.

• North Carolina provides gap analysis statistics alongside other performance metrics as a tool to move beyond benchmarks in school planning.
• The Data Quality Campaign created infographics depicting how teachers and principals might use data in practice.

• The National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity offers a guide on implementing asset-based thinking in the CLNA process.

• Advance CTE’s Beyond the Numbers guide highlights ways to help users interpret data:
  • Summarize data points using visualizations.
  • Embed context and definitions in data tools.
  • Use reporting tools to direct users to additional data sources and to act.
Data Initiative to Watch

• With funding from the ECMC Foundation, Advance CTE’s Advancing Postsecondary CTE Data Quality Initiative focuses on improving the quality of CTE data and reporting at the postsecondary level.
  • Five recipients in 2020: Alabama, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Oregon
  • Grant period runs over two years
Special Populations: Data Collection

• Identify community organizations serving special populations to provide data and assist in planning (e.g., United Ways of Vermont).

• Use existing structures to identify and validate special populations data.
  • Every state has a State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth and a Migrant Education Coordinator.
  • Add representatives with expertise in special populations to data review boards and audit processes (Montana).
  • Explore creative ways to use passive data collection to identify student indicators (e.g., leveraging FAFSA to identify homelessness).

• Set shared definitions for special populations at the postsecondary level (Minnesota).

Spotlight on homelessness organization partnerships and data collection:

- Kentucky’s Perkins V Steering Committee includes state and local homeless stakeholder representation.
- Housing Alliance Delaware, a statewide nonprofit in Delaware, administers the Community Management Information System, the data system that Delaware uses to collect and review data on homelessness.
- Washington State realigned data reporting to better capture the number of homeless students across the state using the Homeless Student Stability program.
Special Populations: Innovative Support Mechanisms

• California created a Perkins-funded Joint Special Populations Committee that focuses on student needs in secondary and postsecondary education.

• Arizona created a joint Special Populations Specialist position to monitor secondary and postsecondary data collection.

• Nebraska outlined resources and ideas to support each special population.

• Local and national organizations that focus on special populations can help create a system for identification and support.

Support for students experiencing homelessness:
- As part of the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program, Prince George’s County homeless response teams meet with local CTE leaders regularly in Maryland.
- The National Center for Homeless Education provides support for and data on students experiencing homelessness.