**New Jersey Department of Education**

**Request for Qualification (RFQ)**

# SUPPORT EQUITY IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FOR FY25

Issue Date:  **Friday, September 20, 2024**

Responses Due by **12:00** p.m. Eastern Standard Time on: **Friday, October 4, 2025**

**State of New Jersey**

**Department of Education**

**100 Riverview Plaza**

**PO Box 500**

**Trenton, NJ 08690**

## 1.0 PURPOSE AND INTENT

The Office of Career Readiness (OCR) is looking for an external partner to deliver professional development that specifically focuses on the Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V) and equity and access of special populations students. The partner will provide ongoing professional development, research, and resources to New Jersey Perkins V grant recipients from Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and community colleges on nontraditional fields and special populations. The partner will be responsible for creating workshops, new resources, and conducting research on equity within New Jersey CTE programs. The OCR has budgeted up to $100,000 in fiscal year 2025 for an external partner to work in collaboration with the OCR’s Career Equity Resource Center (CERC) staff. Qualified partners shall have an extensive background knowledge in Perkins V legislation, nontraditional fields and special populations in CTE, and the ability to work with OCR to develop and provide professional development and resources to groups of up to 250 Perkins Project Directors, educators, administrators, staff and academic and career counselors that support CTE programs.

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

Under the Perkins V legislation, states are required to fund professional development and activities that assist with increasing the employment opportunities for populations who are chronically unemployed or underemployed. Funds also should be used for supporting programs for special populations the lead to high skill, high wage, or high demand occupations. Special populations under Perkins V are defined as the following:

* Individuals with disabilities;
* Individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth and adults;
* Individuals preparing for non-traditional fields;
* Single parents, including single pregnant woman;
* Out-of-workforce individuals;
* English learners;
* Homeless individuals; youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system; and;
* Youth with a parent who is a member of the armed forces.

The New Jersey Department of Education Perkins V Plan, adopted in 2020, includes a foundational element in the equity of opportunity and access of all students to actively participate in quality CTE programs across the state. The state has set a target of 28.5% of non-traditional students enrolled in programs in non-traditional fields. In the most recent secondary data available from 2022-2023, Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes that had more than 75% of reported programs not meeting the state target were analyzed in conjunction with occupational data pulled from [O\*Net](https://www.onetcenter.org/overview.html), a database sponsored by U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

Data showed that there are a total of eight CIP codes across the state where zero programs are meeting the non-traditional targets. Two of these programs stood out with high percentages of jobs for every student enrolled. Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Engineering Technology/Technician (CIP code 150501), has a projected number of jobs in New Jersey of approximately 1,220, while only 215 students are currently enrolled in secondary CTE programs. Dental Assisting/Assistant (CIP code 510601), has a projected 1,200 openings in New Jersey with only 292 students currently enrolled in CTE programs for this CIP code at the secondary level. Due to the large number of projected openings, these CIP codes show evidence of the ability to support student growth with non-traditional enrollment. Given the significant variation of CTE programs across the state, there is an opportunity to explore the strategies that districts can successfully utilize to address recruitment.

The state plan also dictates a goal for students to have access to meaningful work-based learning opportunities (WBL). Disaggregated data for work-based learning indicators showed that many districts struggle with WBL for students. One special population that continued to not meet the state target amongst both comprehensive and vocational schools is economically disadvantaged individuals. Economically disadvantaged individuals were also the special population most likely to not meet targets for graduation from CTE programs. Data supports a need for professional development and resources to assist districts in supporting individuals from economically disadvantaged families.

## 1.2 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

**Proposals must be submitted via email -** [purchasi@doe.nj.gov](mailto:purchasi@doe.nj.gov)

**Proposals must be received by 12:00 p.m. EST Wednesday, October 4, 2024**

To be considered, the Proposal must be marked **EQUITY** and received by the NJDOE at the appropriate location by the required time. The Date and Time are indicated on the cover page of the RFQ and above. Any Proposal not received on time via e-mail, as indicated below, will be rejected. Submit Proposal via e-mail to purchasi@doe.nj.gov with the subject line: **EQUITY**

All Respondents should try to limit their Proposals to ten (10) single-sided pages or less, at no smaller than 12-point font.

After proposal submission, all information submitted by Respondents in response to the Proposal solicitation is considered public information, except as may be exempted from public disclosure by the Open Public Records Act, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq., and the common law.

If it becomes necessary to clarify or revise this RFQ, such clarifications or revision will be by Addendum. Any Addendum to this RFQ will become part of this RFQ and part of any contract awarded as a result of this RFQ.

## 1.3 NJSTART

Bidders interested in doing business with the State must register in NJSTART, New Jersey’s eProcurement system. Registration is easy and takes only a few minutes. Visit [www.njstart.gov](http://www.njstart.gov/) and click on “Register” to start the process. Respondents to this RFQ are strongly encouraged to visit the NJSTART Vendor Support Page, which contains Quick Reference Guides (QRGs), supporting videos, a glossary of NJSTART terms, and helpdesk contact information. The NJSTART Vendor Support Page is located at: <http://www.nj.gov/treasury/purchase/njstart/vendor.shtml>

## 1.4 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The documents listed below must be completed prior to award: A complete checklist is attached.

**State of NJ Standard Terms and Conditions and Waivered Contracts/Delegated Purchasing Authority**

**Ownership Disclosure Form**

**Disclosure of Investigations and Actions Involving Bidder Form**

**Disclosure of Investment Activities in Iran Form**

**Source Disclosure Certification Form**

**Certification of Non-Involvement /Russia or Belarus**

**MacBride Principles Certification Form**

**Affirmative Action Supplement Form**

**Note:** A copy of a valid New Jersey Business Registration must be submitted. If not already registered with the New Jersey Division of Revenue, registration can be completed on line at the Division of Revenue website: <http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/revenue/index.html>

Bidders are urged to check the status of their New Jersey Business Registration.

## 2.0 GENERAL DEFINITIONS/ACRONYMS

**Addendum —** Written clarification or revision to this RFQ issued by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE).

**Bidder —** An individual or business entity submitting a Proposal in response to this RFQ.

**CTE —** Career and Technical Education.—The term ‘‘career and technical education’’ means organized educational activities that—

1. offer a sequence of courses that—
   1. provides individuals with rigorous academic content and relevant technical knowledge and skills needed to prepare for further education and careers in current or emerging professions, which may include high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations, which shall be, at the secondary level, aligned with the challenging State academic standards adopted by a State under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965;
   2. provides technical skill proficiency or a recognized postsecondary credential, which may include an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or an associate degree; and
   3. may include prerequisite courses (other than a remedial course) that meet the requirements of this subparagraph;
2. include competency-based, work-based, or other applied learning that supports the development of academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning and problem solving skills, work attitudes, employability skills, technical skills, and occupation-specific skills, and knowledge of all aspects of an industry, including entrepreneurship, of an individual;
3. to the extent practicable, coordinate between secondary and postsecondary education programs through programs of study, which may include coordination through articulation agreements, early college high school programs, dual or concurrent enrollment program opportunities, or other credit transfer agreements that provide postsecondary credit or advanced standing; and
4. may include career exploration at the high school level or as early as the middle grades (as such term is defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

**CIP —** The Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) provides a taxonomic scheme that supports the accurate tracking and reporting of fields of study and program completions activity.

**Contract —** This RFQ, any addendum to this RFQ, and the bidder’s Proposal submitted in response to this RFQ, as accepted by the State.

**Consultant/Contractor —** The bidder awarded a contract resulting from this RFQ.

**Director—** Director, Office of Budget & Accounting**.**

**Evaluation Committee —** A Committee established by the Director assigned to review and evaluate Proposals submitted in response to this RFQ and to recommend a contract award to the Director.

**May —** Denotes that which is permissible, not mandatory.

**Must —** Something that is so important that it cannot be missed or ignored.

**The Law —** The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) was signed into law by President Trump on July 31, 2018. This bipartisan measure reauthorized the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) and continued Congress’ commitment in providing nearly $1.4 billion annually for career and technical education (CTE) programs for our nation’s youth and adults. Perkins V represents an important opportunity to expand opportunities for every student to explore, choose, and follow career and technical education programs of study and career pathways to earn credentials of value.

**Nontraditional Field —** The term ‘‘non-traditional fields’’ means occupations or fields of work, such as careers in computer science, technology, and other current and emerging high skill occupations, for which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25 percent of the individuals employed in each such occupation or field of work. As an example, engineering would be noted as a nontraditional field with female students representing students with nontraditional status.

**Northern Region —** the New Jersey counties that are designated in the northern half of the state including Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren.

**Shall** **—** To express intent or determination.

**Southern Region** **—** The New Jersey counties that are designated in the southern half of the state including Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland

Gloucester, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean, and Salem.

**WBL — Work-based Learning (WBL)** is defined by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, commonly referred to as Perkins V, as sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings, to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.

## 2.1 Special populations under Perkins V are defined as the following:

* Individuals with disabilities;
* Individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth and adults;
* Individuals preparing for non-traditional fields;
* Single parents, including single pregnant woman;
* Out-of-workforce individuals;
* English learners;
* Homeless individuals;
* Youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system, and;
* Youth with a parent who is a member of the armed forces and is on active duty.

## 3.0 SCOPE OF WORK

The OCR would like to secure a bid from an external partner to provide services to support the work of the CERC. Bids should show the partner can complete the following goals and objectives within the agreement period:

Goal 1: Develop support for districts to be able to expand opportunities for nontraditional and special population students, as defined by Perkins V legislation, to access quality career and technical education programs.

Objective 1.1: Provide professional development to secondary, postsecondary vocational school district and college staff to identify, analyze and reduce barriers related to the underrepresentation of special populations and student subgroups in CTE programs of study.

Objective 1.2: Perform research and share findings on the practices, policies, and culture at Perkins funded New Jersey county vocational and comprehensive school districts, and county colleges that have outlying success in nontraditional enrollment.

Objective 1.3: Provide targeted professional development and resources for increasing nontraditional enrollment in programs with low nontraditional enrollment

Objective 1.4: Provide professional development to Perkins funded districts on how to remove barriers for students who come from families that are at an economic disadvantage.

Goal 2: Increase the awareness of district staff in strategies for accessible and equitable learning environments in career and technical education for diverse students.

Objective 2.1: Provide professional development for secondary, postsecondary and college staff on micro messages that includes how messaging can impact student achievement and shape our culture, institutions, classrooms, and the individuals within them.

Objective 2.2: Provide professional development to secondary, postsecondary and college staff on the impacts of formal policies and culture on institutional bias.

Objective 2.3: Provide professional developmentto secondary, postsecondary and college staff to help foster a growth mindset in counselors, educators, and students.

Objective 2.4: Provide professional development to educators and counselors to help them learn the key tenets of self-efficacy, as well as research-based strategies that can increase their students’ self-efficacy, positively affecting academic achievement, advancement, and resilience.

Goal 3: Promote access to meaningful work-based learning opportunities for all CTE students.

Objective 3.1: Provide professional development on how to increase participation and remove barriers for Perkins V defined special population subgroups, specifically targeting training for subgroups that not meeting the state targets for work-based learning placement.

Objective 3.2: Provide professional development and resources on how to make work-based learning opportunities in Perkins funded CTE programs of study more accessible for students with disabilities.

Objective 3.3: Provide professional development and resources on strategies to engage more economically disadvantaged students in quality work-based learning.

## 3.1 PROGRAM CRITERIA

* The vendor will provide:
  + A minimum of three in-person full-day (seven hours) interactive and collaborative workshops held between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
    - Two in-person workshops (one per region — see chart below) focused on supporting equity in secondary CTE programs.

| **Northern Counties** | **Southern Counties** |
| --- | --- |
| Bergen | Atlantic |
| Essex | Burlington |
| Hudson | Camden |
| Hunterdon | Cape May |
| Middlesex | Cumberland |
| Morris | Gloucester |
| Passaic | Mercer |
| Somerset | Monmouth |
| Sussex | Ocean |
| Union | Salem |
| Warren |  |

* + - One centrally located in-person workshop (Mercer, Middlesex, or Monmouth Counties) focused on supporting equity in postsecondary CTE programs.
  + A minimum of five stand-alone virtual interactive and collaborative workshops of at least two hours focusing on but not limited to:
    - Professional development, and resources to enhance educator knowledge in Perkins V legislation as it relates to equity, inclusion, cultural diversity, micro messaging, and other topics that align with the legislative requirements set forth in Perkins V.
* Registration and in-person event location will be the responsibility of the OCR. OCR will determine times and dates of events in collaboration with the vendor and is subject to change, with final authorization by OCR.
* The vendor must provide OCR access to the professional development curriculum, resources, and materials for secondary and postsecondary CTE educators, administrators, and special population coordinators that will be used to deliver the professional development trainings.
* The OCR will collaborate with the vendor on which professional development, resources, and materials will be offered to CTE professionals and create a calendar for the delivery of professional development. Times, dates, number of days (consecutive or non-consecutive), number of participants, venue location, regional location, and determination as to whether professional development will be virtual or in person, will be determined by OCR in collaboration with the vendor and is subject to change, with final authorization by OCR.
* All in person and virtual professional development will be held during normal business hours between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
* Consultant travel shall be included in the proposal for the in-person workshops.

## 4.0 REQUIRED COMPONENTS OF THE RFQ PROPOSAL

Proposals in response to this RFQ must respond to each of the following requests **in the order indicated.**

## 4.1 APPROACH AND PLANS

The bidder shall describe its approach and plans for accomplishing the work outlined above in 3.0 RFQ Scope of Services. The bidder must set forth its understanding of the requirements of this RFQ and its ability to successfully complete the contract. This narrative should convince the State that the bidder understands the objectives that the contract is intended to meet, the nature of the required work and the level of effort necessary to successfully complete the contract.

## 4.2 EXPERIENCE

The bidder’s documented experience in successfully completing contracts of a similar size and scope in relation to the work required by this RFQ.

## 4.3 ABILITY

Ability of firm to implement and perform the Scope of Work based on the presentation in its Technical Proposal: The overall ability of the Bidder to undertake and successfully perform the technical requirements of the Scope of Work as demonstrated by its presentation in the Technical Proposal.

## 4.4 CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

The program will be managed by a NJDOE-assigned State Contract Manager, or his/ her designee. The State Contract Manager will be responsible for engaging the Vendor and is the person that the Vendor must contact after the contract is executed for answers to any questions and concerns about any aspect of the contract.

## 4.5 POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

The bidder should set forth a summary of all problems that the bidder anticipates during the term of the contract. For each problem identified, the bidder should provide its proposed solutions.

## 4.6 ORAL INTERVIEW

The State may require oral interviews, and reserves the right to do so, in person, by telephone or a virtual platform. Proposals should be complete on their face. The State reserves the right to request clarifying information after submission of the Proposal Application.

## 5.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

**Approach and Plans:** The bidder’s approach and plans in meeting the requirements of this RFQ.

**Personnel**: The qualifications and experience of the bidder’s management, supervisory, and key personnel assigned to this contract.

**Experience of firm:** The bidder’s documented experience in successfully completing contracts of a similar size and scope in relation to the work required by this RFQ.

**Ability of firm to implement and perform the Scope of Work based on the presentation in its Technical Proposal:** The overall ability of the Bidder to undertake and successfully perform the technical requirements of the Scope of Work as demonstrated by its presentation in the Technical Proposal.

## 6.0 BUDGET

The total budget for this project shall not exceed $100,000.00. Vendors are requested to provide a detailed cost for their proposed services and activities. All quotes shall be all-inclusive.

## 7.0 PAYMENTS SCHEDULE AND DELIVERABLES

The payment schedule and deliverables are based on the 24/25 school year, of 10 months ending June 30, 2025.

| **Deliverable** | **Reporting Period** | **Payment Date** | **Payment Amount** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A report that details a proposed plan of work to achieve all goals and objectives during the agreement period. Report should include a schedule of proposed plan of work, timeline of workshops and summary of collaborative planning efforts with OCR. | September 1-November 15, 2024 | November 29, 2024 | 20% |
| A report that details the progress on all goals and objectives and includes proposed and completed workshops, curriculum outlines, agendas, and training resources. | November 16, 2024 – January 15, 2025 | January 31, 3025 | 30% |
| A report that details the progress on all goals and objectives and participant evaluations of all professional development and training sessions that occurred. | January 16, 2025-May 31, 2025 | June 15, 2025 | 30% |
| A final report of all program activities, promising practices, research findings, and actions that were taken to address each objective, when they were taken, and the results from activities. Report should include recommendations for further work. | June 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025 | July 15, 2025 | 20% |