

**EQUITY LEADERSHIP  
ACADEMY FOR STATES  
AMPLIFIES EQUITY IN  
PERKINS V**

Pilot Executive Summary  
and Recommendations



**NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR  
PARTNERSHIPS IN EQUITY**

NAPE provides equity leadership  
and capacity building to transform  
education and workforce systems.

# WHAT IS THE EQUITY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY?

NAPE developed the Equity Leadership Academy for States to help postsecondary agencies guide colleges across their states to realize the benefits of Perkins V. By placing equity at the core when implementing the Perkins V Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments (CLNA), colleges can provide career and technical education (CTE) programs that meet the needs of students, the community, and industry. This pilot brought together teams that included students on each from 10 states to help postsecondary education departments:

- ▶ Adopt an equity lens and build skills to host equity-minded conversations
- ▶ Build institutional capacity to support local education agencies with Perkins V
- ▶ Create community with other states and share lessons learned

The group completed the Academy pilot in February 2021 and wanted to share its recommendations to help

other organizations continue their equity initiatives. This ECMC Foundation-funded program was a no-cost benefit for the 10 state members that applied: Arkansas, Delaware, Idaho, Iowa, New Jersey, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, Wyoming, and Wisconsin.

While the Equity Leadership Academy was a pilot program, we hope to continue growing the equity in CTE movement by equipping postsecondary leaders with the tools they need to keep equity at the core of the CLNA process. Increasing capacity at the local, state, and national levels necessitate continued learning, growing our support community, co-creating shared accountability systems, and amplifying authentic student voice.

Transforming our systems requires us all. Please use and share these recommendations with other educators. Visit [napequity.org/special-programs/equity-leader-academy/](https://napequity.org/special-programs/equity-leader-academy/) for a PDF to distribute electronically.

“Working with NAPE has really shown me the power of planning and taking action, especially when it comes to student voice and centering people who are less represented. No matter who you are or where you are coming from, you can start the process and make a difference.”

– Felix Wilson, Student Representative, South Carolina



# ACADEMY RECOMMENDATIONS TO KEEP EQUITY IN PERKINS V



Throughout the Equity Leadership Academy, a number of recommendations emerged that can help guide postsecondary leaders across the nation working to keep equity at the core of the Perkins V CLNA process.

## 1 PRIORITIZE YOUR INTERNAL WORK BEFORE LAUNCHING SYSTEM-WIDE CHANGE

Systemic change first begins with our individual, internal work. Our experiences, our awareness, and our perspective constrain our ability to deeply engage in transformational change within our institutions. The rush to interventions meant to uplift marginalized student groups too often reinforce and

replicate existing power structures that limit student access. To truly counter institutional momentum and entertain new solutions, educators must first interrogate their understandings with the help of professional learning before launching system-wide change. This is magnified for state department staff responsible for guiding local education agencies in implementing the Perkins V CLNA process.

### Reflection Questions:

- 1 How have your experiences shaped your perspective?
- 2 What work can you do to expand your understanding of the space you occupy as a professional educator?
- 3 What resources are readily available to support your personal growth?

“The one big takeaway for me has been how many times we make decisions without student voice, and especially as the Department of Education.”

– State Leader

## 2 DEFINE A SHARED EQUITY VISION

Defining equity and developing a framework of action are necessary steps to guide institutions' work. Just as an individual must grow in their understanding of their place in marginalization, so too must governments and schools.

### How do institutions define equity?

- A** Develop a framework of equity to guide state work with local education agencies
- B** Engage interdepartmentally - work with personnel across departments to define and communicate the equity vision

To help ensure teams work from a similar place of understanding, Departments of Education and institutions must begin by crafting a shared equity vision and understanding. Interdepartmental and intradepartmental conversations on important issues will ensure that the collective is moving forward together, both engaging in self-analysis within, and guiding groups externally in a cohesive manner.

### Reflection Questions:

- 1 Does your department and organization have a common understanding of marginalization and the organization's role in dismantling bias?
- 2 What would it mean to your organization for individuals to regularly engage in difficult and honest conversations centered on systems of marginalization?
- 3 Is your department honestly ready to support colleagues and other educators on access and equity issues?

## 3 ENGAGE STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY

All too often, student and community voices are viewed as afterthoughts when addressing CTE equity gaps. While stakeholder engagement is mandated in Perkins V, student and community engagement often is not done in ways that honor the experiences and expertise of the very students, families, and communities our institutions are meant to serve. Organizations that allow authentic student and community voices to drive and guide our grounded action





will see equity gaps narrow. The very populations who are often excluded from decisions that directly impact their opportunities and success will drive solutions.

### Reflection Questions:

- 1 Reflect on your own experience as a student. Were you engaged in decision making that directly impacted you? If so, what did that process look like? Did you feel heard? How does that relate to your current engagement with students?
- 2 Are you actively cultivating relationships with the students you serve? If so, what students are you currently listening to? Why? Who is missing?
- 3 Do you have the appropriate staff and training to authentically amplify and integrate students in your institutional decision making? If not, what support do you need?

## 4 CREATE A CULTURE OF SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY

Perkins V legislation provides states and local education agencies with a critical framework to center equity within CTE through the CLNA. The needs assessment process is the primary

lever within Perkins V for educators to highlight factors limiting the CTE success of marginalized communities and underrepresented student groups. However, regulations within this legislative framework should not be the only accountability levers to ensure we meet students' needs. We must create a culture of shared accountability within ourselves, our institutions, and the larger systems in which we participate if we are to truly create the change our students deserve. This level of accountability relies heavily on trust, relationships, and a shared commitment to redistributing power and resources to ensure the most marginalized students get to define and achieve what success means to them.

### Reflection Questions:

- 1 What does shared accountability mean to you? What does accountability mean in your institution?
- 2 How do you hold yourself accountable to the most marginalized students' voices?
- 3 How do you ask for accountability when you do not have it? What support do you need to facilitate healthy shared accountability systems in your institution?

*“ The whole point of saying I’m coming from the same perspective or different perspective, and interacting with everybody is expanding my world. ”*






– Student Participant





[napequity.org/special-programs/equity-leader-academy/](https://napequity.org/special-programs/equity-leader-academy/)

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