

# TECHNICAL EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM REPORT

for Kosciusko and Whitley Counties

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# Technical Education Ecosystem Report

## for Kosciusko and Whitley Counties

This report presents the findings of a comprehensive research study conducted by TPMA in partnership with the Don Wood Foundation and OrthoWorx on the Career and Technical Education (CTE) ecosystem in Kosciusko and Whitley counties (the two-county region) in Indiana. The study examined various aspects of the CTE ecosystem, including CTE offerings, student demographics, credentials of value, and alignment to labor market demand. The findings provide a clear picture of the current state of the CTE ecosystem in the counties and offer insights into the challenges and opportunities that exist. Below is an overview of the key findings during the analysis of the current CTE ecosystem in the two-county region.

### Key Findings

- 1. Strategic Partnerships Primarily Propel Workforce Development Between CTE Programs and Large Employers:** The collaboration between CTE programs and employers in the two-county region catalyzes workforce development. By leveraging the strengths of local employers and existing innovative programs, the region facilitates a seamless transition from classroom learning to career readiness.
- 2. Employers Need CTE Training to Teach Both Technical and Employability Skills:** This disconnect leads to employers having differing perspectives on the value of the technical aspects of secondary CTE training, which compels them to hire students who show an eagerness to learn, regardless of their technical proficiency. Finally, local employers' internal training programs offer a fast track to better careers and pay, benefiting workers and the local economy. However, these programs could inhibit the employees' inclination to pursue further education. It is essential to connect internal training with external education options so students develop well-rounded skills and keep the doors open for future career growth.
- 3. Challenges in Work-Based Learning (WBL) Implementation:** Employers face obstacles in supporting students' WBL experiences due to concerns about liabilities, administrative workload, and uncertainty about post-training employment. Addressing these challenges requires clear communication, streamlined processes, and collaborative efforts between schools and employers to maximize the benefits of WBL for student career exploration and development.
- 4. Inconsistent Access to CTE Pathways and WBL Opportunities:** WBL coordinators play a crucial role in student success by helping students discover their interests and connecting them to meaningful experiences. Yet, challenges emerge in meeting the growing demand as more students join CTE programs and school districts expand WBL opportunities.
- 5. Rural School Districts Face Distinct Challenges:** Students in rural CTE districts encounter barriers related to transportation, scheduling, and course availability, limiting their access to CTE pathways and WBL opportunities. Ensuring equitable access requires innovative solutions to address logistical challenges and expand program offerings in rural communities.
- 6. Multiple CTE Districts Complicates Resource Allocation and Collaboration Efforts:** Dividing the region into multiple CTE districts complicates resource allocation and collaboration efforts. Streamlining administrative processes and fostering regional partnerships can optimize resource effectiveness and enhance the quality of CTE education provided across districts.
- 7. Advanced Manufacturing CTE Pathways Are Cost-Prohibitive for Schools.** The primary funding source for CTE programs comes from the state to cover the costs of staffing, materials, and other essential programming components. Despite this, new training programs for high-wage, high-demand pathways have higher equipment and materials costs compared to existing programs. Local employers have extended their support by generously donating their used equipment to schools. However, this practice results in students learning on equipment that does not meet industry standards.
- 8. A Unified Strategy for Talent Pipeline Development is Needed:** Collaboration among employers, schools, and community stakeholders is essential for a regional talent pipeline strategy. The two-county region can effectively address workforce needs and support economic recovery by aligning efforts and resources.
- 9. Balancing Graduation Pathways and Career Interests:** The introduction of Graduation Pathways may encourage students to pursue CTE courses primarily to meet graduation requirements rather than aligning with their personal career interests. With increased student interest in CTE programs, schools may encounter growing difficulties in accommodating the heightened demand, the high initial costs of establishing and sustaining CTE programs, and the struggle to recruit qualified CTE instructors.



# Strategic Recommendations:

## ■ **Develop a region-wide talent development and retention strategy.**

Developing a cohesive strategy for talent development and retention across the two-county region is a top recommendation. This strategy should integrate the technical education ecosystem into a comprehensive regional plan, aligning CTE courses with local employer needs and promoting effective communication for long-term sustainability.

## ■ **Establish a regional intermediary.**

The creation of a central intermediary organization is recommended to streamline employer engagement and support apprenticeship programs, especially for small and medium-sized businesses. This intermediary would facilitate a more unified approach to talent development, ensuring equitable access to work-based learning opportunities. Moreover, if this intermediary is recognized on the state-approved list for managing and overseeing Career Scholarship Accounts (CSAs) for high school students, it could assist these students in leveraging their accounts to cover expenses related to transportation and educational materials for these emerging work-based learning programs.

## ■ **Implement a youth apprenticeship program.**

Inspired by models like NE INFAME and Marion County's Modern Apprenticeship Program (MAP), introducing a youth apprenticeship program in the region is advised. Such a program would offer students paid work experience, college credits, and professional credentials, all the while working for the same employer for three years, thus improving their readiness for the workforce and encouraging retention within the counties.

## ■ **Embed entrepreneurialism within all CTE pathways in Kosciusko and Whitley county schools to support the region's thriving small business sector.**

Given the significant role small businesses play in the economies of the two-county region, with more than 60% of businesses employing fewer than 10 people, there is a pressing need to support and foster entrepreneurial skills among high school students through CTE pathways. This approach is not only vital for supporting the large number of microenterprises that form the backbone of the local economy but also for ensuring the economic resilience and sustainability of the region.

## ■ **Lobby the state to require schools to report CTE student demographic information on Form 30A.**

Indiana schools are mandated to submit their CTE student enrollment figures to the state annually through a Form 30A report. However, this report does not currently require a breakdown of student demographics, complicating efforts to verify equitable access to CTE programs among different student subgroups. To address this issue, it is recommended that stakeholders in the two-county region advocate for legislative changes and engage with the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) to mandate the inclusion of demographic data in the Form 30A report, ensuring a comprehensive understanding and monitoring of CTE program accessibility across all student populations.

## ■ **Conduct an in-depth analysis of CTE enrollment for all student subgroups and create strategies to address any disparities.**

Addressing the underrepresentation of student subgroups, particularly Hispanic/Latino students, in CTE programs in this region is essential. A thorough analysis of enrollment data for all subgroups, including those living at or below the federal poverty line and students with disabilities, will help identify and rectify disparities. Initiatives like targeted outreach and awareness programs, improved data collection, and feedback mechanisms will ensure more inclusive and effective CTE programs.

## ■ **Develop remote work-based learning options.**

To effectively address the accessibility challenges faced by high school students in the two-county region in Indiana, particularly those stemming from geographical and economic barriers, the establishment of remote work-based learning experiences is important. In these regions, numerous high schools are situated within small communities where public transportation options are nonexistent, preventing students from accessing work-based learning opportunities with employers located outside their immediate vicinity. This geographical isolation is compounded by economic constraints, as many students cannot afford personal vehicles, further limiting their ability to participate in such programs. By implementing remote work-based learning experiences, students can overcome these physical and financial barriers. This innovative approach allows them to connect virtually with a wide array of employers, not only within their local areas but also beyond, thereby broadening their exposure to various industries and professional environments.

The execution of these recommendations is designed to bridge the identified gaps and enhance the existing strengths within the CTE ecosystem of the two-county region, a region uniquely positioned to funnel talent into its thriving orthopedic manufacturing industry. By aligning CTE programs with the dynamic needs of this robust sector and others, these efforts are vital not only for preparing students for high-demand careers but also for supporting the growth of local employers and the regional economy. This report serves as both a comprehensive strategy for elevating the CTE ecosystem and a call to action for regional stakeholders. It encourages a unified commitment to career education and training, with the goal of developing a workforce that is skilled, adaptable, and ready to contribute to the orthopedic industry and other key sectors.

# Career and Technical Education Overview

The landscape of CTE education has undergone significant changes in the last few years, mainly due to Indiana passing multiple bills. The following sections provide an overview of these changes and conclude with a summary of some of the key aspects of the legislation. With the goal of collectively strengthening the bridge between high school education and the workforce, these legislative efforts collectively emphasize work-based learning experiences and expanding opportunities for earning academic credits through nontraditional learning experiences. It also ensures the safety and protection of students in work-based learning settings. Additionally, they introduce novel concepts like the Career Scholarship Account, which offers financial support and career planning resources to eligible students, thereby facilitating a more targeted and efficient approach to career readiness.

The integration of recent legislative changes with Indiana's Graduation Pathways requirements is a key focus, underscoring the mandate for students to demonstrate a variety of skills and competencies to earn their diploma. This holistic educational approach, which merges academic achievement with employability skills and postsecondary readiness, is a deliberate effort to equip students for the varied challenges of the contemporary world. Furthermore, the combined impact of these legislative and educational shifts is explored, revealing their contribution towards creating an adaptive, relevant, and student-centered CTE framework in the two-county region.





# Key Definitions

## Next Level Programs of Study:

One significant component of the technical education ecosystem in Indiana is the Next Level Programs of Study (NLPS). Launched by Indiana's Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) in the 2022-2023 school year, NLPS aims to enhance the consistency, quality, and intentional instruction of CTE throughout the state.<sup>1</sup> NLPS encompasses a range of courses and pathways, known as CTE concentrators, designed to equip students with the skills and competencies necessary for success in various career fields. These programs of study undergo vetting by education and industry leaders to ensure alignment and quality, and they must offer students an opportunity to earn a credential of value. For a program of study to qualify as the CTE concentrator requirement for Box 3 of Indiana's Graduation Pathways, a student must complete at least three courses within the same program of study: a principles course, a concentrator A course, and a concentrator B course.<sup>2</sup> While not mandatory for graduation, participation in a high-quality work-based learning (WBL) experience at the conclusion of the program is strongly encouraged as it provides students with a chance to apply their skills and knowledge in real-world situations.

## CTE Funding Designations for High Schools:

CTE funding for high schools in Indiana is categorized into three levels of value: high, moderate, and less than moderate. This funding is known as Form 30A reimbursement funding. These designations are based on the demand and wage potential of occupations associated with CTE courses at the state level.<sup>3</sup> However, it should be noted that these designations may not align with the actual labor market demand in the two-county region. Despite potential misalignment, these value designations determine the amount of CTE funding that is allocated to schools in the county, which may influence the courses offered by these schools. Private schools neither have access to this CTE reimbursement funding from the state, nor any other state funding for CTE.

## Credentials of Value:

In the context of high school CTE students, "credentials of value" refer to nondegree credentials that validate job-relevant skills.<sup>4</sup> These credentials, including college credits, technical certificates from Indiana colleges, and industry-recognized certifications, are increasingly significant in the technical education landscape because they provide students with a means to acquire and demonstrate competencies directly applicable to the labor market. Currently, there is a heightened emphasis on the importance of credentials of value for Indiana's high school students, with the Indiana Department of Education recognizing the increased access to high-value postsecondary credentials, and the number of students earning these credentials as a key area of focus in their comprehensive approach to rethinking the high school experience.<sup>5</sup>

## InTERS Data:

The Indiana Technical Education Reporting System (InTERS) serves as the platform for collecting and managing data related to CTE, which is subsequently reported to Vocational and Technical Education for the Federal Report.<sup>6</sup> This system plays a pivotal role in tracking student progress, evaluating program effectiveness, and ensuring compliance with federal reporting requirements. School districts across the state are required to upload their CTE data into InTERS annually through the completion of Form 30A, which is a document of record stating the number of students enrolled in each CTE course and the associated number of credits.<sup>7</sup> The majority of the CTE data presented in this report was directly sourced from the InTERS system for the 2022-2023 school year, providing an up-to-date and accurate depiction of the technical education ecosystem in the two-county region.

1 - Governor's Workforce Cabinet. Career Pathways / Programs of Study. <https://www.in.gov/gwc/cte/career-pathways-programs-of-study/>

2 - Office of Career and Technical Education. Next Level Programs of Study (NLPS) Overview. [https://www.in.gov/gwc/cte/files/NLPS-Review-Doc-w-Competencies\\_21-22-SY.pdf](https://www.in.gov/gwc/cte/files/NLPS-Review-Doc-w-Competencies_21-22-SY.pdf)

3 - Indiana Department of Workforce Development. SY 22/23 Career & Technical Education Program Categorizations and Funding Recommendations. <https://www.in.gov/sboe/files/Changes-to-the-2022-23-CTE-Funding-Memo-Recommendations.pdf>

4 - National Conference of State Legislators. Credentials of Value. <https://www.ncsl.org/education/credentials-of-value>

5 - Indiana Department of Education. Indiana Department of Education Outlines Plan to Rethink the High School Experience. <https://www.in.gov/doe/about/news/indiana-department-of-education-outlines-plan-to-rethink-the-high-school-experience/>

6 - Governor's Workforce Cabinet. InTERS/Performance and Accountability. <https://www.in.gov/gwc/cte/intersperformance-and-accountability/>

7 - Central Indiana Corporate Partnership. Career and Technical Education in the State of Indiana. <https://www.in.gov/gwc/files/CTE-in-the-State-of-Indiana-Final.pdf>



# Graduation Pathways

The modernization and refinement of CTE is critical as schools fully implement and roll out Indiana’s Graduation Pathways. This includes a focus on more closely aligning CTE programs with the needs of employers and the career goals of students.

Prior to the implementation of Graduation Pathways, to earn an Indiana High School Diploma, students were required to meet two requirements:

- 1. Meet course and credit requirements; and
- 2. Pass the Graduation Qualifying Exams (GQE) in English and math.

The Indiana State Board of Education approved new graduation requirements, known as the Graduation Pathways, in 2018, with the Class of 2023 being the first group of high school students required to follow them<sup>8</sup>.

However, beginning with the class of 2019, high schools were given the option to “opt in” students from the classes of 2019-2022 to the newly established graduation requirements<sup>9</sup>, commonly referred to as Graduation Pathways, detailed in the table below. This transitional approach provided high schools with a few years to adapt and prepare for the change in requirements. Additionally, it offered more students the opportunity to benefit from these new educational offerings, ensuring a smoother shift to the updated graduation framework.

Starting with the class of 2023, all Indiana high school students are now required to fulfill three key criteria to graduate. These criteria, known as “boxes,” include earning the necessary credits for a high school diploma, demonstrating employability skills, and exhibiting postsecondary-ready competencies<sup>10</sup>.

Within each of these boxes, students have a variety of options, or “pathways,” to meet the respective requirement. It is important to note that Graduation Pathways do not specifically refer to career or college tracks; rather, they encompass the diverse methods and options students can choose to fulfill these three graduation criteria. The following table provides a detailed overview of the available pathways within each graduation requirement box.

It is important to note that Graduation Pathways do not specifically refer to career or college tracks; rather, they encompass the diverse methods and options students can choose to fulfill these three graduation criteria.

8 - <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/INDOE/bulletins/1e85888>  
9 - Meeting Indiana’s Graduation Exam Requirements. Indiana Department of Education.  
<https://www.in.gov/doe/files/ways-meet-gqe-or-grad-pathways-req-2018-19-final.pdf>  
10 - <https://www.in.gov/doe/files/Grad-Pathways-Flyer.pdf>

## OVERVIEW OF GRADUATION PATHWAYS AND RELATED REQUIREMENTS

BOX	OVERVIEW
<b>High School Diploma</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ General Diploma</li> <li>○ Core 40 Diploma</li> <li>○ Academic Honors Diploma</li> <li>○ Technical Honors Diploma</li> </ul>
<b>Employability Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Completion of a project-based learning experience</li> <li>○ Completion of a service-based learning experience</li> <li>○ Completion of a work-based learning experience</li> </ul>
<b>Postsecondary Ready Competencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Honors diploma</li> <li>○ ACT or SAT</li> <li>○ Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)</li> <li>○ State- and industry-recognized credential or certification</li> <li>○ State-, federal-, or industry-recognized apprenticeship</li> <li>○ Career technical education concentrator</li> <li>○ AP/international baccalaureate/ dual credit/Cambridge International courses or College Level Examination Program (CLEP) exam</li> <li>○ Locally created pathway</li> </ul>

\***Locally created pathways** refer to competencies and/or assessments determined at the local level, extending beyond the existing postsecondary readiness competencies. Locally created pathways serve as indicators that a student possesses the essential knowledge and skills required for success beyond high school.

## Recent CTE Legislation

The following legislation passed by the State of Indiana is reshaping the way high school education, particularly CTE, aligns with the dynamic needs of the job market and the career aspirations of students. At the heart of this transformation is a series of legislative measures, including House Enrolled Acts 1549, 1094, 1002, Senate Enrolled Act 196, and House Bill 1635, each playing a pivotal role in redefining and enhancing the CTE ecosystem. Below is a summary of each of these key pieces of CTE legislation.

**House Enrolled Act 1549 (2020)** is instrumental in strengthening the connection between employers and educational institutions. By directing the Commission for Higher Education, the Department of Education, and the Governor's Workforce Cabinet to provide guidance and resources on postsecondary enrollment opportunities with work-based learning experiences, this bill helps CTE centers align their programs with the needs of employers. This initiative empowers CTE centers to offer more robust work-based learning opportunities, ensuring that students are well-prepared for future careers.

**Senate Enrolled Act 196 (2020)** further supports CTE centers by streamlining the process for students to obtain credit for non-school educational experiences. This simplification encourages students to engage in additional learning experiences outside traditional classrooms, including those offered by CTE centers. It recognizes the value of experiential learning and allows students to receive academic credit for their participation in CTE programs, fostering a more dynamic and comprehensive education.

**House Enrolled Act 1094 (2022)**<sup>11</sup> demonstrates the state's commitment to ensuring the safety and protection of high school students involved in work-based learning courses. The legislation mandates that employers purchase adequate liability and worker's compensation insurance coverage, and that the employer is responsible for covering any associated costs. By providing a clear framework for employer liability and insurance coverage, this bill alleviates concerns and challenges related to the hiring of youth under the age of 18. Currently, there is no option for state-sponsored insurance coverage. CTE centers benefit from this legislation as it encourages more employers to participate in work-based learning opportunities, thereby expanding the range of options available to students.

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<sup>11</sup> - Indiana, Public Law 140. IC 20-20-38.5 §2. (2022) HEA 1094



**House Enrolled Act 1002 (2023)**<sup>12</sup> offers significant benefits to CTE programs, expanding work-based learning opportunities and college and career awareness for high school and postsecondary students. A main component of House Enrolled Act 1002 (HEA 1002) is the Indiana Career Scholarship Account (CSA) program which provides financial support for students enrolled in eligible postsecondary education, training, and certifications, reducing barriers for students. These eligible courses or education experiences include apprenticeships, applied learning experience, work-based learning, and credentials attainment. The CSA funds can be used by students to cover career coaching, postsecondary education, training, transportation, equipment, and certification and credentialing examinations. This innovative approach to CTE funding provides \$5,000 annually to eligible students in grades 10-12 at an Indiana public or private school.

To start, students with a CSA will meet with an intermediary—an organization facilitating connections between individuals and companies seeking new talent. This intermediary plays a crucial role by guiding students in developing a personalized plan aligned with their chosen career path. The intermediary could be an employer offering a joint CTE program, a facilitator for modern youth apprenticeships, or a college awarding the Indiana College Core (ICC).

The intermediary serves as the bridge connecting students to essential support services, communicating with both students and their schools. In this collaborative effort, the sending school takes responsibility for providing the CTE curriculum, while the employer contributes through on-the-job training and skill evaluation. This integrated approach ensures a cohesive and comprehensive experience for students.

Students currently enrolled in a CTE program are ineligible for CSAs. However, they can still participate in local CTE centers, ensuring they maintain access to valuable hands-on learning experiences. Although CTE centers at public schools can serve as scholarship account providers, they do not receive CTE grants for students with scholarship accounts.

**House Bill 1635 (2023)** addresses the use of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery exam (ASVAB) as a graduation qualification and requires that any student using a score on the ASVAB to graduate to also submit a form affirming their intent to enlist in the military. Additionally, the Indiana State Board of Education is mandated to review and update guidance on using the ASVAB for graduation, and schools are not permitted to require students to use any qualification, including the military exam, to graduate. These provisions seek to ensure that the use of the ASVAB as a graduation pathway aligns with students' career goals and provides a diverse range of options for college and career readiness.

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12 - Indiana. Public Law 202. IC 5-34-1-7 § 6 (2023). HEA 1002: Sec. 6.

# Technical Education in Kosciusko and Whitley Counties

The CTE landscape in the two-county region is shaped by a myriad of elements, from statewide educational initiatives and funding frameworks to credentialing processes and data reporting systems. Comprehensive data are the foundation for informed strategy and policymaking in program development, resource allocation, and policy enactment.

During the 2022-2023 school year, the two counties boasted a high school population of approximately 5,893 students distributed across six public high schools:

## Kosciusko County Public High Schools:

- Tippecanoe Valley
- Warsaw Community
- Wawasee

## Whitley County Public High Schools:

- Churubusco
- Columbia City
- Whitko

Though they serve a relatively small population of CTE students, the two-county region is currently organized into two CTE centers and one CTE cooperative:

- **Whitko Career Academy** serves Whitko
- **Warsaw Area Career Center** includes Warsaw Community and Tippecanoe Valley
- **Pathways CTE Cooperative** supports Wawasee and Columbia City (as well as Fairfield and Goshen in Elkhart County, and West Noble in Noble County)





In June 2023, Whitley County Consolidated Schools (WCCS) informed Pathways CTE of its intention to establish a new CTE district. While WCCS will continue to collaborate with Pathways for access to programs not available within its own offerings, this marks a pivotal shift in their approach to CTE. The formal application to create this new CTE district was submitted on February 16, 2024, with WCCS now awaiting further instructions from the Commission for Higher Education.

This initiative stems from a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) conducted by WCCS and a noticeable increase in student enrollment. The WCCS Board of School Trustees has expressed strong support for this new direction, particularly the development of a dedicated CTE building on the Columbia City High School campus. Furthermore, WCCS is dedicated to fostering collaboration with nearby Churubusco and Whitko schools. The goal is to transparently address any challenges, whether real or perceived, to ensure that the establishment of the new CTE district benefits all stakeholders.

Churubusco Jr-Sr High School opts out of participating in the three CTE centers within the two-county region. Instead, it provides CTE courses directly within its facility and sends several of its students to attend CTE classes at the Impact Institute in Noble County. The data presented in this section includes the CTE classes offered in-house to Churubusco students. However, since the Impact Institute is located outside the study's region and does not provide Form 30A data broken down by sending school, students from Churubusco attending the Impact Institute are not accounted for in this data set.

The following sections delve into the diverse CTE programs across these counties, assessing their alignment with the labor market needs of Indiana. A specific focus is placed on the participation of student population subgroups (e.g., race and ethnicity) within CTE programs and the extent to which students can acquire college credits while still in high school.



# Baseline Data

This section of the report outlines the enrollment data for high school students in the two-county region who participated in CTE programs during the 2022-2023 school year. The data, sourced from the September 2023 InTERS Form 30A report, offers a comprehensive overview of CTE engagement at the high school level in these counties.

Students who have taken multiple CTE courses within the same academic year are counted separately for each course, which can lead to an enrollment percentage that exceeds 100%. A prime example of this is seen with Warsaw Community High School, where such an occurrence is noted.

Additionally, take note that the CTE enrollment data for Whitko Jr/Sr High School is recorded under the name 'Whitko Career Academy' in the Form 30A report. This designation is used because the Whitko Career Academy is the designated CTE center that facilitates these courses for students from Whitko Jr/Sr High School. Warsaw Area Career Center and Pathways CTE Cooperative do not capture students on the Form 30A report, so students attending those centers are likely captured in the data for their sending school.

TABLE 1: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN CTE COURSES  
IN KOSCIUSKO AND WHITLEY COUNTIES (SY2022-2023)

	TOTAL # OF STUDENTS ENROLLED	# OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN CTE	% OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN CTE
REGION TOTAL	5,893	14,950	253.7%
Kosciusko County Total	3,558	8,162	229.4%
Tippecanoe Valley High School	545	1,708	313.4%
Warsaw Community High School	2,104	4,709	223.8%
Wawasee High School	909	1,745	192.0%
Whitley County Total	2,335	6,788	290.7%
Churubusco High School	647	700	108.2%
Columbia City High School	1,147	4,117	358.9%
Whitko Career Academy	541	1,971	364.3%

NOTE: students enrolled in multiple CTE courses within the same academic year are counted multiple times, which can result in an enrollment percentage greater than 100%.

# CTE Offerings in Kosciusko and Whitley Counties

Table 2 represents the distribution of students across different CTE programs of study in the two-county region. The courses included in this data were only courses that qualified for CTE funding at the high value, moderate value, or less than moderate value funding designations and therefore do not include introductory, career exploration, pilot, or work-based learning (WBL) courses.

These pathways are categorized into three value levels: high, moderate, and less than moderate. The value levels are determined based on the demand and wage potential of jobs in the corresponding industries at a state level. High value pathways prepare students for high-demand, high-wage jobs, while less than moderate value pathways correspond to industries with lower demand or lower wage potential. Importantly, the value level influences the amount of funding that schools receive for these courses, with more funding allocated to high value pathways. Below is a more detailed explanation of how these designations are determined:

- The Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) used the IN-Demand Ranking methodology to evaluate demand and wage for occupations associated with CTE courses per IC 20-43-8. Each occupation was evaluated on a decile scoring system across five variables, which was then summarized to equate to an overall value (known as a Flame Threshold”) of between 0.00 and 5.00. This was the same methodology that was used and adopted by the SBOE for SY18/19 CTE course designations.
- IN Demand Ranking scores (Flame Threshold) of each occupation were summed and averaged to equate to an overall CTE course score known as a Flame Funding Level. Less than moderate value CTE courses scored within a 0.00-2.99 threshold. Moderate value CTE courses scored within a 3.00-3.49 threshold, and high value CTE courses scored between 3.50 and 5.00.<sup>13</sup>

The chart below shows how the Flame Funding Level (CTE course score) of a CTE course corresponds to the Flame Threshold (IN Demand Ranking score).

FLAME FUNDING LEVELS WITH FLAMES THRESHOLD		
Course Designation	Flame Threshold	Reimbursement Rate (per credit, max of 3)
Less than Moderate Value	0.00-2.99	\$200
Moderate Value	3.00-3.49	\$400
High Value	3.50-5.00	\$680

While these value designations align with the labor market demand of the state of Indiana and not that of Kosciusko and Whitley counties, the school districts in each county choose which programs in each designation to offer to their students. Therefore, these value designations still show an accurate picture of the technical education system.

13 - Indiana Department of Workforce Development. SY 22/23 Career & Technical Education Program Categorizations and Funding Recommendations. <https://www.in.gov/sboe/files/Changes-to-the-2022-23-CTE-Funding-Memo-Recommendations.pdf>

Table 2 presents a categorization of CTE students enrolled in courses identified as high value, moderate value, or less than moderate value, and excludes CTE students enrolled in “introductory” courses. These students were excluded from this breakdown because introductory courses lack direct alignment with the Indiana labor market, focusing instead on initial exposure rather than specific skill development relevant to current job opportunities.

**TABLE 2: CTE VALUE DESIGNATION BREAKDOWN**

DISTRICT	STUDENTS IN HIGH VALUE CTE COURSES	STUDENTS IN MODERATE VALUE CTE COURSES	STUDENTS IN LESS THAN MODERATE CTE COURSES	TOTAL # OF CTE STUDENTS
REGION TOTALS	55.2% (5,480)	32.2% (3,194)	12.6% (1,245)	9,919
<b>Kosciusko County Total</b>	<b>60.0% (3,008)</b>	<b>31.3% (1,567)</b>	<b>8.8% (439)</b>	<b>5,014</b>
Tippecanoe Valley High School	56.6% (758)	37.4% (501)	6.0% (80)	1,339
Warsaw Community High School	63.5% (1,677)	25.6% (677)	10.9% (288)	2,642
Wawasee High School	55.5% (573)	37.7% (389)	6.9% (71)	1,033
<b>Whitley County Total</b>	<b>50.4% (2,472)</b>	<b>33.2% (1,627)</b>	<b>16.4% (806)</b>	<b>4,905</b>
Churubusco High School	51.8% (161)	41.5% (129)	6.8% (21)	311
Columbia City High School	45.5% (1,479)	31.8% (1,035)	22.7% (739)	3,253
Whitko Career Academy	61.4% (808)	35.2% (463)	3.5% (46)	1,317

The two-county region has many students engaged in CTE courses, with a total of 9,919 students enrolled, with the majority of 55.2% (5,480 students) enrolled in high value CTE Courses. This indicates a strong emphasis on pathways that are aligned with high-demand, high-wage jobs, signaling an educational alignment with market needs at the state level. moderate value CTE courses account for 32.2% (3,194 students) of enrollments, demonstrating a balanced distribution of students preparing for careers with moderate demand and wage potential. Students in less than moderate value CTE courses represent the smallest share at 12.6% (1,245 students), reflecting a lesser focus on industries with lower demand or wage potential.

Kosciusko County displays a robust enrollment in high value pathways, with 60.0% (3,008 students) of its CTE student population engaged in such courses, surpassing the regional average. This suggests a strong county-level focus on preparing students for the most in-demand sectors. The county's engagement in moderate and less than moderate value courses is 31.3% (1,567 students) and 8.8% (439 students), respectively, indicating a priority given to higher-value CTE pathways.

Whitley County has a lower percentage of students in high value pathways compared to Kosciusko County at 50.4% (2,472 students). However, the county has a higher engagement in less than moderate value pathways at 16.4% (806 students), suggesting a broader inclusion of various CTE programs that may cater to a wider array of industry needs or student interests.

Overall, the CTE ecosystem in the two-county region reveals a strong inclination towards High Value CTE courses, with targeted enrollment in programs that align with high-wage, high-demand jobs. However, the presence of students in moderate and less than moderate value courses indicate a comprehensive approach to technical education, ensuring that students have access to a full spectrum of career opportunities. The data reflects a strategic alignment with both local and state labor market demands, suggesting that the schools are not only responsive to current industry needs but also invested in the long-term economic vitality of their communities.



# CTE Student Demographics

CTE opportunities for high school students have been advocated extensively to broaden access and engagement for all students. Table 3 below delineates the racial and ethnic demographics of students enrolled in CTE within the two-county region for the 2022-2023 academic year. Sourced from the Form 30A reports and verified against the Indiana Department of Education's detailed "School Enrollment by Special Education and English Language Learners (Updated SY 2022-2023)"<sup>14</sup> document, this data provides a clear view of the demographic makeup in CTE programs.

**TABLE 3: CTE STUDENT BREAKDOWN BY RACE AND ETHNICITY<sup>15</sup>**

	REGION TOTALS						
	Asian Students	Black Students	American Indian Students	Pacific Islander Students	White Students	Hispanic Students	Multiracial Students
High Value CTE	0.5%	1.1%	0.4%	0.0%	81.3%	7.2%	9.5%
Moderate Value CTE	0.5%	1.3%	0.1%	0.0%	84.5%	4.8%	8.7%
Less than Moderate Value CTE	0.8%	1.4%	0.2%	0.0%	85.9%	3.9%	7.8%
CTE Student Total <sup>16</sup>	0.6%	1.2%	0.3%	0.0%	82.9%	6.0%	9.0%
<b>Total High School Students in the County</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>81.4%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>

	TIPPECANOE VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL						
	Asian Students	Black Students	American Indian Students	Pacific Islander Students	White Students	Hispanic Students	Multiracial Students
High Value CTE	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	79.7%	0.0%	19.8%
Moderate Value CTE	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	81.6%	0.0%	17.6%
Less than Moderate Value CTE	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	92.5%	0.0%	7.5%
CTE Student Total	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	81.2%	0.0%	18.2%
<b>Total High School Students in the County</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>79.4%</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>

	WARSAW COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL						
	Asian Students	Black Students	American Indian Students	Pacific Islander Students	White Students	Hispanic Students	Multiracial Students
High Value CTE	1.4%	2.0%	0.1%	0.1%	69.8%	21.1%	5.5%
Moderate Value CTE	0.6%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	73.7%	19.2%	3.6%
Less than Moderate Value CTE	3.1%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	70.7%	16.4%	6.6%
CTE Student Total	1.4%	2.4%	0.1%	0.1%	70.9%	20.1%	5.1%
<b>Total High School Students in the County</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>69.5%</b>	<b>23.1%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>

<sup>14</sup> - Indiana Department of Education. <https://www.in.gov/doe/files/school-enrollment-ell-special-education-2006-23.xlsx>

<sup>15</sup> - Race and ethnicity data are self-reported by students. Anomalies may be present (i.e. Hispanic and Multiracial categories).

<sup>16</sup> - Students enrolled in multiple CTE courses within the same academic year are counted multiple times, reflecting in the total number of CTE students being greater than the total number of high school students.

	WAWASEE HIGH SCHOOL						
	Asian Students	Black Students	American Indian Students	Pacific Islander Students	White Students	Hispanic Students	Multiracial Students
High Value CTE	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	76.6%	0.0%	22.9%
Moderate Value CTE	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	77.6%	0.0%	20.7%
Less than Moderate Value CTE	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	18.6%
CTE Student Total	0.1%	0.7%	0.3%	0.0%	77.2%	0.0%	21.8%
<b>Total High School Students in the County</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>83.6%</b>	<b>13.1%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>

	CHURUBUSCO HIGH SCHOOL						
	Asian Students	Black Students	American Indian Students	Pacific Islander Students	White Students	Hispanic Students	Multiracial Students
High Value CTE	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	96.9%	0.6%	2.5%
Moderate Value CTE	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	96.8%	0.8%	1.6%
Less than Moderate Value CTE	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	95.2%	4.8%	0.0%
CTE Student Total	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	96.7%	1.0%	2.0%
<b>Total High School Students in the County</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>95.1%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>

	COLUMBIA CITY HIGH SCHOOL						
	Asian Students	Black Students	American Indian Students	Pacific Islander Students	White Students	Hispanic Students	Multiracial Students
High Value CTE	0.3%	0.7%	0.3%	0.0%	90.9%	0.0%	7.9%
Moderate Value CTE	1.0%	1.3%	0.4%	0.0%	90.4%	0.0%	7.0%
Less than Moderate Value CTE	0.0%	1.1%	0.4%	0.0%	90.5%	0.0%	8.0%
CTE Student Total	0.4%	1.0%	0.3%	0.0%	90.7%	0.0%	7.6%
<b>Total High School Students in the County</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>89.7%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>

	WHITKO CAREER ACADEMY						
	Asian Students	Black Students	American Indian Students	Pacific Islander Students	White Students	Hispanic Students	Multiracial Students
High Value CTE	0.0%	2.0%	1.5%	0.0%	88.5%	5.0%	3.1%
Moderate Value CTE	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	92.4%	5.0%	2.6%
Less than Moderate Value CTE	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	0.0%	0.0%
CTE Student Total	0.0%	1.2%	0.9%	0.0%	90.3%	4.8%	2.8%
<b>Total High School Students in the County</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>91.7%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>

It is important to note that race and ethnicity data are self-reported by students or their parents or guardians. Therefore, there might be instances where students identified as Hispanic ethnicity and White race are classified as "Multiracial" in the Form 30A data due to the way it was reported.

Within the regional scope, White students are the predominant group in CTE programs, with their highest participation seen in the less than moderate value CTE courses at 85.9%. Hispanic/Latino students, while holding a smaller share, show notable enrollment in high value CTE courses at 7.2%, surpassing their overall high school enrollment percentage of 6.0%. Similarly, multiracial students enroll in high value CTE courses at a rate of 9.5%, which is more than triple their general representation of 2.9% within the high school student population.

Despite these instances of strong participation, a broader look at the data reveals that Hispanic students are not proportionally represented in CTE programs region wide. They constitute 6.0% of CTE students, which is significantly lower than their 13.6% share of the regional high school demographic, indicating a region-wide gap in CTE participation.

A closer look at individual counties and schools reveals the scope of this disparity. In Kosciusko County, at Tippecanoe Valley High School, the absence of Hispanic/Latino students in CTE, where they make up 0% despite being 17.8% of the student body, is particularly striking. Warsaw Community High School, while having a healthier representation at 20.1%, still exhibits a gap when compared to their 23.1% share of the total student population. At Wawasee High School, the disparity is even more pronounced, with no Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in CTE, yet they account for 13.1% of the student body.

In Whitley County, Churubusco High School's Hispanic/Latino student participation in CTE is low at 1.0%, not fully reflective of the 2.3% presence in the student population. Columbia City High School shows a significant discrepancy, with no Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in CTE, despite comprising 4.7% of the student body. In contrast, Whitko Career Academy demonstrates a more equitable representation, with Hispanic/Latino students participating in CTE at 4.8%, which is nearly aligned with their 5.7% representation in the student body.

When considering the CTE value designations, most schools show no marked disparities in the enrollment of Hispanic/Latino students across different CTE categories. However, Tippecanoe Valley and Wawasee high schools stand out for the absence of Hispanic/Latino student enrollment in any CTE value category, which is in sharp contrast to their larger population percentage within the schools.

Overall, the data indicates that Hispanic/Latino students may be underrepresented in CTE programs across the region. Addressing these potential disparities is essential to fostering equitable access to CTE programs and ensuring that the educational opportunities in these valuable fields are inclusive of the diverse student population.

## Credentials of Value

Dual credits are a key component of the CTE system in Indiana, offering students the opportunity to earn concurrent credit for both high school graduation and postsecondary education, typically in partnership with institutions like Ivy Tech Community College or Vincennes University. Table 4 details the dual credits earned in CTE courses within the two-county region.

In the context of CTE, dual credits serve as an integral element that bridges secondary and postsecondary education, thereby equipping students with a head start on college coursework and facilitating a smoother transition into their chosen careers. Successful completion of these courses results in credits that are accepted by the student's high school as well as the partnering postsecondary institution.

For students pursuing further education, these dual credits hold the potential to shorten the time to degree completion by fulfilling certain college or university requirements. However, the applicability of these credits is at the discretion of the receiving postsecondary institution. Therefore, the transferability of CTE dual credits is not universally assured and may vary between different colleges and universities.

**TABLE 4: DUAL CREDITS AWARDED BY VALUE DESIGNATION**

HIGH VALUE CTE COURSES		
	Student Total	Total # of Dual Credits Awarded
<b>REGION TOTALS</b>	<b>5,480</b>	<b>6,863</b>
<b>Kosciusko County Total</b>	<b>3,008</b>	<b>5,242</b>
Tippecanoe Valley High School	758	438
Warsaw Community High School	1,677	4,438
Wawasee High School	573	366
<b>Whitley County Total</b>	<b>2,472</b>	<b>1,621</b>
Churubusco High School	161	54
Columbia City High School	1,479	1,471
Whitko Career Academy	808	96

MODERATE VALUE CTE COURSES		
	Student Total	Total # of Dual Credits Awarded
<b>REGION TOTALS</b>	<b>3,194</b>	<b>4,073</b>
<b>Kosciusko County Total</b>	<b>1,567</b>	<b>3,227</b>
Tippecanoe Valley High School	501	747
Warsaw Community High School	677	1,999
Wawasee High School	389	481
<b>Whitley County Total</b>	<b>1,627</b>	<b>846</b>
Churubusco High School	129	87
Columbia City High School	1,035	702
Whitko Career Academy	463	57

LESS THAN MODERATE VALUE CTE COURSES		
	Student Total	Total # of Dual Credits Awarded
<b>REGION TOTALS</b>	<b>1,245</b>	<b>612</b>
<b>Kosciusko County Total</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>519</b>
Tippecanoe Valley High School	80	36
Warsaw Community High School	288	420
Wawasee High School	71	63
<b>Whitley County Total</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>93</b>
Churubusco High School	21	24
Columbia City High School	739	42
Whitko Career Academy	46	27

Table 4 provides a detailed account of dual credits earned by students across various CTE courses in the region, encompassing Kosciusko and Whitley counties. In total, students in the region have earned 11,548 dual credits in CTE courses.

In the high value CTE Courses category, a total of 5,480 students have earned 6,863 dual credits. Kosciusko County accounts for a significant portion of these, with 3,008 students earning 5,242 credits, indicating a strong participation rate in courses that align with high-demand, high-wage occupations. Notably, Warsaw Community High School stands out with 1,677 students receiving 4,438 dual credits, the highest in the category, suggesting a robust engagement with CTE programs that may offer a direct pathway to higher education and the workforce.

For moderate value CTE courses, there are 3,194 students in the region earning 4,073 dual credits. Again, Kosciusko County shows substantial engagement with 1,567 students obtaining 3,227 credits. Columbia City High School demonstrates significant participation with 1,035 students earning 702 credits, reflecting a commitment to providing students with valuable skills for occupations with moderate demand and wage potential.

In the less than moderate value CTE category, which aligns with industries having lower demand or wage potential, 1,245 students have earned a total of 612 dual credits. Here, the distribution is more even, with Kosciusko County seeing 439 students earning 519 credits, which is a substantial majority of the credits in this category. Warsaw Community High School again shows high participation, with 288 students earning 420 credits.

The data indicates a strong inclination towards high value CTE courses in the region, which is consistent with the emphasis on preparing students for high-demand and high-wage careers. Kosciusko County demonstrates a high level of engagement across all CTE categories. However, there is a noticeable decrease in dual credits earned as the perceived value of the CTE pathway decreases, with the least number of credits awarded in the less than moderate value category. This could point to the prioritization of programs that are more directly aligned with the needs of the local and state labor markets.

Moreover, the data suggests that there may be an opportunity to enhance the offerings and student engagement in less than moderate value CTE courses, ensuring that students interested in these pathways also have access to the benefits of dual credits. The overall high number of dual credits earned underscores the region's commitment to CTE as a viable and beneficial pathway for students' academic and professional futures.





# Regional Labor Market Demand



A central component of the workforce is the understanding of labor market trends for occupations that may require specialized education and training opportunities. The following assessment aims to assess the demand for certain industries and occupations and the supply of current workers to fill these roles across the two-county region.

The following comprehensive analysis of the labor market demand will establish a clear understanding of the alignment between CTE classes and enrollments with the actual needs and trends of the local labor market. By examining this alignment, stakeholders in this region can understand how effectively CTE programs are preparing students for the current and future job market, ensuring that their education directly contributes to employability and meets regional economic needs.

Key findings indicate a diverse labor market with significant opportunities in manufacturing, healthcare, and technical fields. The data reveals that a substantial portion of jobs in the region require a high school diploma or equivalent, highlighting the importance of secondary education in securing local employment. Moreover, certain technical roles demanding postsecondary non-degree awards present promising opportunities for CTE students aiming for immediate employment post-graduation.

Insights from labor market demands guide the enhancement of CTE programs. It ensures that the curriculum remains relevant and responsive to the changing economic landscape, equipping students with the skills and knowledge most sought after by employers. Furthermore, this alignment is vital for making informed decisions about program expansions, resource allocation, and partnerships with local industries, ultimately leading to a more robust and efficient CTE ecosystem that benefits students, employers, and the community at large.

# Demand for Talent: Industry and Occupation Outlook

The workforce in the two-county region is primarily employed in the manufacturing sector. When looking at industries across the region, it provides a robust assessment into the region's strengths for current and future employment. One important assessment includes looking at the density of certain industries through the lens of a location quotient.<sup>17</sup> In the region, manufacturing (4.68), other services (except public administration) (1.18), and wholesale trade (1.03) have high quotients, indicating that industries in the region are highly concentrated, specializing in specific sectors and employing a significant portion of the local population.

Employment numbers are another segment to look at when assessing strong industries. Manufacturing (20,087), retail trade (5,024), government (4,689), and health care and social assistance (4,367) employ the highest number of the population. Together, these four industries employ 57% of the total region's labor force.

Percent change is another critical assessment as part of the workforce landscape to demonstrate where the future of jobs will grow. When looking at the percent change over the next five years, construction jobs will grow 8%, wholesale trade will grow 7%, and manufacturing will grow 5%, adding to a high percentage of new job growth.

**TABLE 5: TOP 10 INDUSTRIES IN KOSCIUSKO AND WHITLEY COUNTY, IN, 2018-2026<sup>18</sup>**

NAICS	INDUSTRY	2018 JOBS	2022 JOBS	2026 JOBS	% CHANGE (2018-2022)	% CHANGE (2022-2026)	LOCATION QUOTIENT (2022)
31	Manufacturing	21,102	20,087	21,069	-5%	5%	4.68
44	Retail Trade	5,263	5,024	4,967	-5%	-1%	0.95
90	Government	4,820	4,689	4,601	-3%	-2%	0.59
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	4,700	4,367	4,419	-7%	1%	0.62
72	Accommodation and Food Services	3,642	3,793	3,935	4%	4%	0.84
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	3,272	3,194	3,331	-2%	4%	1.18
23	Construction	2,936	3,017	3,247	3%	8%	0.95
42	Wholesale Trade	1,769	2,064	2,203	17%	7%	1.03
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2,165	2,027	2,082	-6%	3%	0.58
61	Educational Services	1,007	1,338	1,569	33%	17%	0.98

The region's occupations that employ the highest number of residents are generally those that require a high school diploma or less. Currently, the region's highest employing occupation is miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators, employing 2,684 residents. Other jobs with high levels of employment include laborers and freight, stock and material movers (1,308 employed), fast food and counter workers (1,295 employed), and office clerks (1,257 employed).

<sup>17</sup> - The Location Quotient is a statistical measure used to quantify the degree of concentration of a specific industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group within a particular region in comparison to the national average. This metric provides insights into what distinguishes a particular region's characteristics from the broader national norm. Retrieved from Lightcast

<sup>18</sup> - Lightcast (2023). Industry Table for 2022 in Kosciusko and Whitley County. Occupational and Wage estimates are based on Occupational Employment Statistics (QCEW and Non-QCEW Employees classes of worker) and the American Community Survey (Self-Employed and Extended Proprietors).

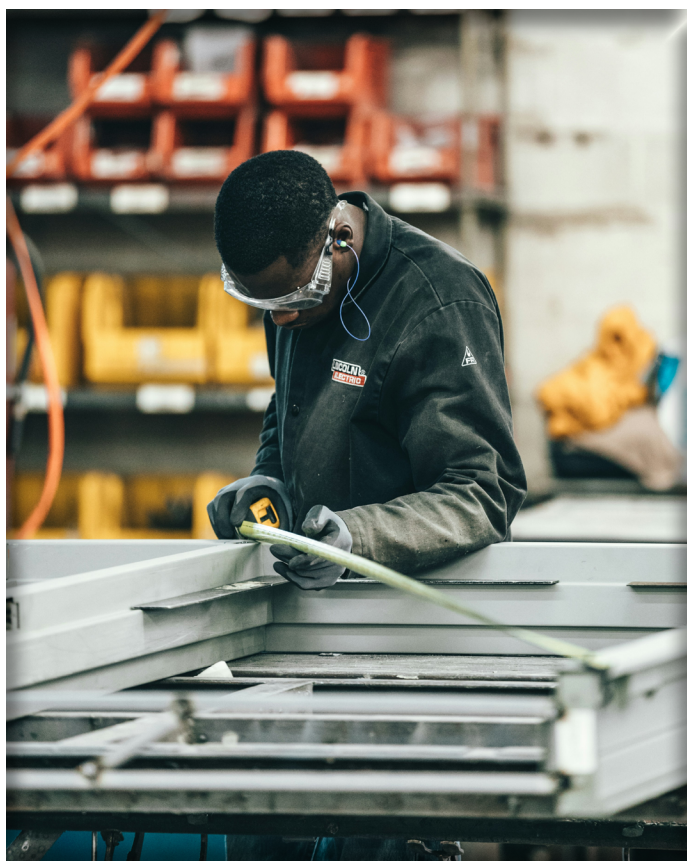
**TABLE 6: TOP 10 OCCUPATIONS IN KOSCIUSKO AND WHITLEY COUNTY, IN, 2018-2026<sup>19</sup>**

SOC	OCCUPATION TITLE	MEDIAN HOURLY EARNINGS	2018 JOBS	2022 JOBS	2026 JOBS	2022 - 2026 % CHANGE	ENTRY LEVEL EDUCATION
51-2098	Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	\$19.21	2,454	2,684	2,603	-3%	high school diploma or equivalent
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	\$17.63	1,335	1,308	1,339	2%	no formal educational credential
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	\$11.58	1,540	1,295	1,353	4%	no formal educational credential
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	\$17.48	1,420	1,257	1,258	0%	high school diploma or equivalent
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	\$13.75	1,437	1,120	1,154	3%	no formal educational credential
51-4041	Machinists	\$24.60	1,013	1,103	1,168	6%	high school diploma or equivalent
41-2011	Cashiers	\$11.38	1,147	1,018	963	-5%	no formal educational credential
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	\$41.93	929	1,000	1,067	7%	bachelor's degree
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	\$29.81	899	844	889	5%	high school diploma or equivalent
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	\$14.68	672	813	838	3%	high school diploma or equivalent

When looking at future demand, miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators, as well as laborers and freight, stock, and material movers (occupations that employ nearly 4,000 workers across the region) are expected to experience reductions or slowed growth. Additional research emphasizes that jobs across Indiana that require little to no education are at higher risk of automating than those with education and training beyond high school.<sup>20</sup> These trends are apparent when looking at future projections for the two-county region. This data underscores the value of a high school diploma for employment in the region's predominant occupations and suggests that educational attainment beyond high school may be correlated with higher wages and job growth potential.

<sup>19</sup> - Lightcast (2023). Occupational Table for 2022 in Kosciusko and Whitley County. Occupational and Wage estimates are based on Occupational Employment Statistics (QCEW and Non-QCEW Employees classes of worker) and the American Community Survey (Self-Employed and Extended Proprietors).

<sup>20</sup> - Ascend Indiana. 2022. Indiana's Evolving Labor Market: How the Pandemic has Accelerated Misalignment in Talent Supply and Demand. Retrieved from: Ascend Indiana



**TABLE 7: EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND REQUIRED EDUCATION FOR ENTRY FOR ALL OCCUPATIONS IN KOSCIUSKO AND WHITLEY COUNTY, IN<sup>21</sup>**

EDUCATION LEVEL	JOB'S REQUIRING ED. LEVEL
No Formal Education Required	13%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	41%
Some College, Non-Degree Award	7%
Associate degree	6%
Bachelor's Degree	23%
Graduate Degree and Higher	10%

The labor market in the two-county region offers a wide spectrum of job opportunities, from positions that require no formal education to those demanding advanced degrees. For CTE students, most available jobs favoring candidates with a high school diploma or equivalent is encouraging, as it suggests a direct pathway from their CTE programs into the workforce. Additionally, the existence of roles requiring higher education indicates potential avenues for career growth and underscores the value of ongoing education and skill development in the local economy. This blend of opportunities caters to a diverse range of career aspirations and skill sets, making the region's job market accessible to a broad spectrum of job seekers, including CTE graduates.

The region's growing occupations that have good wages, and education and training beyond high school, are heavily concentrated across management and business operations, transportation and material moving, and education sectors. When segmenting the region's occupations further to include 10-year projections for those that include good wages and education and training beyond high school, trends emerge across these occupations, generally held across management and business operations (general and operations managers, accountants and auditors, human resources specialists), transportation and material moving (heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers), and education (elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers, postsecondary teachers).

The region has about the same number of jobs that require education and training beyond high school as those that require some level of education. Approximately 54% of all jobs in the region require a high school diploma or less for entry. As demonstrated by the top 10 occupations in the region that employ the most individuals (see Table 6), general and operations managers, positions requiring education beyond high school, have the highest wages among these occupations at \$41.93. This surpasses the second-highest wage of \$29.81 for first-line supervisors of production and operating workers, who only require a high school diploma. This 40% difference between the top two wages can be attributed to the value of specialized skills.

21 - Lightcast (2023). Occupational Table for 2022 in Kosciusko and Whitley County. Occupational and Wage estimates are based on Occupational Employment Statistics (QCEW and Non-QCEW Employees classes of worker) and the American Community Survey (Self-Employed and Extended Proprietors).



**TABLE 8: TOP OCCUPATIONS REQUIRING EDUCATION AND TRAINING BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL, WAGES 200% OR ABOVE THE POVERTY INDEX, AND ABOVE THE MEAN # OF 2022 HIRINGS<sup>22</sup>**

SOC	DESCRIPTION	2022 JOBS	2032 JOBS	2022-2032 % CHANGE	MEDIAN HOURLY EARNINGS	TYPICAL ENTRY LEVEL EDUCATION
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	500	547	9%	\$41.93	bachelor's degree
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	350	382	9%	\$22.97	postsecondary nondegree award
25-1099	Postsecondary Teachers	215	270	25%	\$32.52	doctoral or professional degree
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	154	159	3%	\$22.24	bachelor's degree
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	153	159	4%	\$33.13	bachelor's degree
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	150	156	4%	\$27.81	bachelor's degree
17-2112	Industrial Engineers	139	146	5%	\$38.96	bachelor's degree
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	122	125	3%	\$23.43	bachelor's degree
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	117	119	1%	\$19.76	postsecondary nondegree award
31-9092	Medical Assistants	100	105	4%	\$18.05	postsecondary nondegree award
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	93	108	16%	\$25.81	bachelor's degree
11-3051	Industrial Production Managers	86	91	6%	\$46.81	bachelor's degree

When considering future education and training opportunities in the region, understanding those that lead to high wage and growth opportunities for residents are favorable to provide new or existing programming. These data trends suggest that students in CTE programs aiming to move directly into employment after high school will have promising opportunities in certain technical fields that require postsecondary nondegree awards. However, the data also indicates that higher educational qualifications, such as a bachelor's degree or higher, are associated with higher wages and stronger job growth prospects in various fields. This highlights the value of pursuing further education and training beyond high school for CTE students looking for more lucrative and stable career paths.

Employers are hiring talent with specialized jobs – primarily those requiring qualifications that fall within the healthcare and social assistance industry. When looking at job posting trends, employer demand for specialized skills and qualifications becomes apparent in the region. There is a tremendous need across the region for certifications and qualifications specific to the healthcare and social assistance industry, with 64 job postings referencing cardiopulmonary resuscitation certifications, 58 job postings referencing registered nurses and 41 referencing automated external defibrillator (AED) certification. The demand for these credentials and qualifications indicates critical areas of focus for the region to provide relevant education and training to meet employer demand.

<sup>22</sup> - Lightcast (2023). Occupational Table for 2022 in Kosciusko and Whitley County. Occupational and Wage estimates are based on Occupational Employment Statistics (QCEW and Non-QCEW Employees classes of worker) and the American Community Survey (Self-Employed and Extended Proprietors).



**TABLE 9: TOP QUALIFICATIONS IN JOB POSTINGS IN KOSCIUSKO AND WHITLEY COUNTY, IN, OCTOBER 2020-OCTOBER 2023<sup>23</sup>**

TOP QUALIFICATIONS	POSTINGS WITH QUALIFICATIONS
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	64
Registered Nurse (RN)	58
Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Certification	41
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	41
Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	30
Certified Patient Care Technician (CPCT)	30
First Aid Certification	27
Six Sigma Green Belt	23
Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification	20
Lean Six Sigma Green Belt	14
CompTIA A+	13
Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)	10

The predominance of healthcare-related qualifications in the job postings reflects a significant demand for healthcare professionals and a focus on emergency medical skills in the two-county region. This trend provides valuable insights for students in CTE programs, particularly those interested in healthcare careers, emphasizing the importance of obtaining certifications like CPR, BLS, and CNA for enhanced employability.

The trend for health care and social assistance workers changes when segmenting job postings for specific job titles that employers are hiring for across the region. Manufacturing engineers, quality engineers, development engineers, and registered nurses have the highest number of postings, partially aligning with the top skills and qualifications in the table above.

<sup>23</sup> - Lightcast (2023). Occupational Table for 2022 in Kosciusko and Whitley County. Occupational and Wage estimates are based on Occupational Employment Statistics (QCEW and Non-QCEW Employees classes of worker) and the American Community Survey (Self-Employed and Extended Proprietors).

**TABLE 10: TOP 10 JOB TITLES IN JOB POSTINGS IN KOSCIUSKO AND WHITLEY COUNTY, IN, OCTOBER 2020-OCTOBER 2023<sup>24</sup>**

JOB TITLE	NUMBER OF PROFILES	% OF TOTAL
Manufacturing Engineers	55	2.95%
Quality Engineers	37	1.98%
Development Engineers	29	1.55%
Business Owners/Owners	29	1.55%
Registered Nurses	28	1.50%
Administrative Assistants	10	0.54%
Interns	9	0.48%
Associates	9	0.48%
Community Coaches	9	0.48%

JOB TITLE	% OF TOTAL IN TWO-COUNTY REGION	% OF TOTAL IN TWELVE-COUNTY REGION	% OF TOTAL IN STATE
Manufacturing Engineers	2.95%	0.56%	0.20%
Quality Engineers	1.98%	0.37%	NA
Development Engineers	1.55%	0.18%	NA
Business Owners/Owners	1.55%	1.01%	0.83%
Registered Nurses	1.50%	1.28%	1.09%
Administrative Assistants	0.54%	0.45%	0.41%
Interns	0.48%	0.63%	0.65%
Associates	0.48%	0.32%	0.41%
Community Coaches	0.48%	0.52%	0.39%

<sup>24</sup> - Ibid

There is a clear demand for technical skills, particularly in engineering disciplines related to manufacturing. Simultaneously, the need for registered nurses points to a robust healthcare sector. The presence of job titles like business owners/owners and community coaches also suggests an environment that supports entrepreneurship, business leadership, and community involvement. For students in CTE programs, this data underscores the value of pursuing technical education, especially in engineering and healthcare, while also highlighting opportunities in business and community services. The range of job titles indicates varied career paths, providing multiple avenues for employment in the region.

The area is home to significant, globally recognized employers while more than 60% of businesses in the two counties have fewer than 10 employees. These small businesses form an economic linchpin in the two-county region. Specifically, microenterprises with 1 to 4 employees constitute 31.1% of the business population, totaling 1,220 businesses, and those with 5 to 9 employees make up another 30.3%, or 1,189 businesses. This large share of small businesses indicates a market characterized by a wide array of microenterprises, typical of economies with strong local business sectors.

**TABLE 11: BUSINESS SIZE OF IN KOSCIUSKO AND WHITLEY COUNTY, IN, 2023**

	PERCENTAGE	BUSINESS COUNT
1 to 4 employees	31.1%	1,220
5 to 9 employees	30.3%	1,189
10 to 19 employees	22.6%	889
20 to 49 employees	11.5%	450
50 to 99 employees	2.7%	105
100 to 249 employees	1.3%	52
250 to 499 employees	0.3%	13

The dominance of businesses with fewer than 10 employees highlight their significant contribution to employment and the stability of the community. It also mirrors the region's entrepreneurial environment. However, this reliance on small businesses may also introduce economic vulnerabilities, as these enterprises can be disproportionately affected by market shifts. Recognizing the pivotal role of these smaller employers, there is a clear indication of the need for dedicated support and policy measures that encourage the growth and resilience of small businesses, which are vital to the economic health of the two-county region.

## Labor Pool of Talent

There is a noticeable increase in the aging population (65-years old and above) in the region, and a decline in the younger age group (under 5-years old), with a significant portion of the adult population engaged in the labor market. With a total population of 115,453 across the two-county region in 2022, the region is facing slow but steady population growth. Since 2018, the number of residents in the region has grown approximately 2%.

When isolating the age cohort of those 55 to 64 years old, or those nearing the age of retirement, this cohort comprises 13% of the total current population. When compared to those aged 5 to 19 years old, we see promising trends that there may be a talent pipeline to backfill open jobs from retirements as this cohort makes up nearly 20% of the total population.

One additional cohort to isolate is aged 35 to 54 years old, which generally indicate ages commonly in the workforce. Over the past five years, this cohort has seen 0% growth and will only experience slight growth over the next five years. When compared to those aged 20 to 34, or those newer to the workforce, while they have similar trends with slight growth over the past five years (1%), this cohort is expected to continue the same rate of growth (1%) when looking at future 5-year projections. This indicates that the region may experience challenges in meeting workforce needs with fewer transitions from early- to mid-career individuals.

**TABLE 12: KOSCIUSKO AND WHITLEY COUNTY POPULATION, 2018-2026<sup>25</sup>**

AGE	2018 POPULATION	2022 POPULATION	2026 POPULATION	PERCENT CHANGE (2018-2022)	PERCENT CHANGE (2022-2026)
Under 5 Years	7,311	6,698	6,611	-9%	-1%
5 to 19 Years	22,280	22,677	22,923	2%	1%
20 to 34 Years	21,434	21,635	21,760	1%	1%
35 to 54 Years	27,137	27,135	27,708	0%	2%
55 to 64 Years	16,039	15,571	14,726	-3%	-6%
65 Years+	19,302	21,737	24,213	11%	10%
Total	113,503	115,453	117,941	2%	2%

The data indicates that a significant portion of the adult population is engaged in the labor market, with employment being the dominant status for those within the labor force. The total population of the region as of August 2023 stands at 116,226, of which the labor force (which excludes individuals who are not currently employed) consists of 59,642 individuals. Out of the labor force, 57,525 are employed, indicating that most of the labor force is currently working. However, there are 2,117 (1.8%) of individuals who are unemployed, which means they do not have a job but are actively seeking employment.

The unemployment figure provides a glimpse into the challenges faced by a small portion of the labor force in securing employment. These figures provide a baseline for understanding the local economic environment, planning for workforce development, and identifying areas where intervention might be necessary to improve employment outcomes.

<sup>25</sup> - Lightcast (2023). Population Demographics Table for 2022 in Kosciusko and Whitley County. The demographic data in this report is compiled from several sources using a specialized process. Sources include annual population estimates and population projections from the US Census Bureau, and birth and mortality rates from the US Health Department.

**TABLE 13: LABOR FORCE BREAKDOWN IN KOSCIUSKO AND WHITLEY COUNTY (SEPTEMBER 2023)**<sup>26</sup>

POPULATION	116,226	
16+ Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population	91,596	79%
Not in Labor Force (16+)	31,954	28%
Labor Force (16+)	32,647	51%
Employed	58,949	49%
Unemployed	57,112	2%
Under 16, Military, and institutionalized Population	1,837	21%

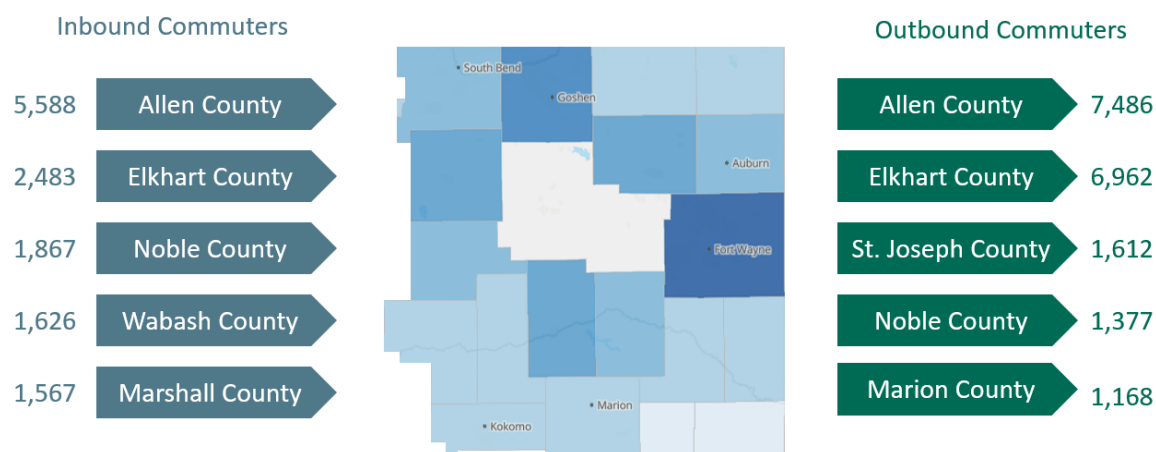
**TABLE 14: TRAVEL TIME TO WORK FOR KOSCIUSKO AND WHITLEY COUNTY'S LABOR FORCE**<sup>27</sup>

COMMUTE TIME	PERCENT OF POPULATION
Less than 10 minutes	21.2%
10 to 14 minutes	20.4%
15 to 19 minutes	18.5%
20 to 24 minutes	11.7%
25 to 29 minutes	7.0%
30 to 34 minutes	8.5%
35 to 44 minutes	3.7%
45 to 59 minutes	5.1%
60 or more minutes	3.9%

Most of the talent works within the two-county region, with fewer inbound workers coming into the two-county region for work. Nearly 72% of the labor force in the two-county region have a commute time of less than 25 minutes. This indicates that talent in the region prefers to work and live in the same region. For those with higher commute times, residents are crossing county lines to work in counties like Allen (7,486), Elkhart (6,962) and St. Joseph (1,612) counties.

When looking at inbound commute patterns, or those that travel from other counties into Kosciusko and Whitley counties, it becomes clear that the two-county region has more outbound travelers than inbound talent. Allen County (5,588 workers) and Elkhart County (2,483) make up the most inbound talent commuting into the two-county region. Noble, Wabash, and Marshall counties also contribute some of their residents to the two-county region's workforce.

**FIGURE 1: COMMUTING IN KOSCIUSKO AND WHITLEY COUNTY, INDIANA**<sup>28</sup>



26 - Lightcast (2023). Economy Overview for Kosciusko and Whitley County.

27 - American Community Survey S0802. 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Means of Transportation to Work by Selected Characteristics.

28 - Source: Lightcast 2023. Community Map for Kosciusko and Whitley County.



## CTE Alignment to Labor Market Demand

The analysis of how current CTE offerings in the two-county region align to current and predicted labor market demands involves mapping the leading industries in the region, as identified in the labor market demand analysis, to their correlation with the CTE programs offered in local high schools. By mapping these key industries to the CTE courses available, the goal is to identify which programs are directly equipping students with the skills and qualifications needed to enter these sectors. Additionally, this process seeks to determine how well these programs meet the entry-level requirements of the region's dominant industries.

Utilizing Form 30A data, which provides a comprehensive breakdown of CTE enrollments and programs by individual districts and county-wide totals, the analysis offers insights into the current state of technical education in the region. The information is then used to understand the effectiveness of CTE programs in bridging the gap between education and employment, ensuring that students are not only gaining relevant skills but are also poised to contribute positively to the local labor market upon graduation.



### Largest Regional Industries

In the two-county region, the labor market data distinctly highlights the prominence of manufacturing, health care and social assistance, and construction as key industries, each with specific and growing talent demands.

- **Manufacturing:** The manufacturing sector shows a substantial presence with 20,087 jobs in 2022 and an expected growth rate of 5% by 2026. This aligns with the demand for skilled roles such as industrial engineers, which are expected to grow by 5% by 2026.
- **Health Care and Social Assistance:** The health and human services sector, with its critical role in community well-being, currently employs 4,367 individuals and is projected to increase slightly by 2026.
- **Construction:** Construction, an industry experiencing steady development, is marked by a 3% increase in jobs to 3,017 in 2022, with further growth anticipated.

Of the CTE programs of study offered to the two-county region's high school students in the 2022-2023 school year, the following programs best align with these top industries.

- **Manufacturing:** advanced manufacturing
- **Health Care and Social Assistance:** health services; human services
- **Construction:** architecture and construction

Table 15 below shows the breakdown of CTE students in these two counties enrolled in these aligned pathways in the 2022-2023 school year. It should be noted that the Whitko Career Academy is the designated CTE center that facilitates these courses for students from Whitko Jr/Sr High School. Warsaw Area Career Center and Pathways CTE Cooperative do not capture students on the Form 30A report, so students attending those centers are likely captured in the data for their sending school.

**TABLE 15: CTE ALIGNMENT TO INDUSTRY DEMAND**

	REGION TOTAL	TIPPECANOE VALLEY	WARSAW COMMUNITY	WAWASEE	CHURUBUSCO	COLUMBIA CITY	WHITKO CAREER ACADEMY
Manufacturing	6.7% (1,008)	0.0% (0)	7.9% (371)	4.1% (72)	0.0% (0)	4.9% (202)	18.4% (363)
Health Care and Social Assistance	11.9% (1,772)	15.5% (264)	12.5% (589)	10.5% (184)	5.9% (41)	12.9% (532)	8.2% (162)
Construction	4.3% (645)	6.0% (103)	3.5% (164)	9.1% (158)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	11.2% (220)

In the manufacturing sector, which accounts for 6.7% (1,008 jobs) of the region's industry, there's a notable disparity in student enrollment across schools. Tippecanoe Valley and Churubusco high schools show no students enrolled in manufacturing CTE programs, suggesting a significant gap between CTE training and industry needs. Conversely, Whitko Career Academy stands out with 18.4% (363 students) enrollment, indicating a strong alignment with local manufacturing job demands. Warsaw Community High School and Columbia City High School also contribute to this sector, but to a lesser extent, with enrollments of 7.9% (371 students) and 4.9% (202 students) respectively.

Healthcare and social assistance, representing 11.9% (1,772 jobs) of the regional total, shows a more consistent enrollment across schools. Tippecanoe Valley High School exceeds the regional average with 15.5% (264 students), while Warsaw Community and Columbia City high schools have substantial enrollments of 12.5% (589 students) and 12.9% (532 students) respectively, closely aligning with the job market. However, Whitko Career Academy's lower enrollment of 8.2% (162 students) indicates a potential gap in meeting the healthcare sector's workforce requirements.

Construction enrollments vary significantly, with the regional average at 4.3% (645 jobs). Whitko Career Academy leads with an 11.2% (220 students) enrollment, well above the regional average, which suggests a strong pipeline for future construction labor. Wawasee High School's enrollment at 9.1% (158 students) also aligns well with industry demand. However, the absence of students in construction related CTE programs at Churubusco and Columbia City high schools points to a misalignment that could affect the local construction industry's talent supply.

Overall, while some schools show strong alignment with regional labor demands in key sectors, others demonstrate significant gaps, particularly in manufacturing and construction CTE pathways. This mismatch suggests the need for strategic adjustments in CTE program offerings and enrollments to ensure that they are effectively preparing students for the available jobs in these critical industries. Addressing these gaps is vital for maintaining the economic vitality of the two-county region and for providing students with viable career paths post-graduation.





# CTE Assets in the Two-County Region

**Strategic partnerships between CTE programs and industry giants propel workforce development in Kosciusko and Whitley counties.**

The two-county region boasts a robust technical education system, underscored by remarkable assets in large employers that are integral to both the local economy and the educational landscape. With innovative programs like the Ortho Academy Model, the Bridge to Employment initiative, and unique collaborations such as those offered by the Whitko Career Academy and Wawasee Area Career & Technical Cooperative, the region has the building blocks to create a seamless transition from classroom to career.

The upcoming analysis provides insight into how these large employers are not only shaping the present workforce but are also investing in the future of the two-county region through dedicated CTE programs that cater to burgeoning industry needs.



## ORTHO ACADEMY MODEL:

In partnership with Purdue University's IN-MaC, industry leaders, Vincennes University, Grace College, Ivy Tech, local Career Centers, and OrthoWorx will support the development and launch of three Ortho Academies to prepare high school and postsecondary students for careers in the local orthopedic industry. The three academies include Paragon Medical parenting with Whitko Community Schools, and Polywood working with Wawasee School Corporation. The third academy, known as the **Regional Advanced Manufacturing Pathway (RAMP)** program, is an innovative collaboration with four employers partnering with Warsaw Community High School and Tippecanoe Valley Schools. The program's employer partners include four local manufacturers—Instrumental Machine & Development (IMD), Medartis, Precision Medical Technologies, and Zimmer Biomet. Launching in the 2024-2025 school year, this opportunity is available to juniors and seniors enrolled in the manufacturing pathway at the Warsaw Area Career Center. Participants will develop practical manufacturing skills through hands-on experiences. As they approach the conclusion of their junior year, students interview with partnering employers for internships during their senior year. The first year of the program is anticipated to accommodate 20 students, with plans for future growth.



### BRIDGE TO EMPLOYMENT:

DePuy Synthes, the Orthopedics Company of Johnson & Johnson, provides mentorship to high school students through their Bridge to Employment (BTE) program. Starting their junior year, students can participate in this three-year program involving partnerships between DePuy, the local high schools and community-based organizations. This initiative provides high school students with a range of valuable opportunities, including engaging in industry exposure, applied learning projects, and career development opportunities.

### THE WHITKO CAREER ACADEMY:

The Whitko Career Academy serves students within Whitko Community Schools and maintains a robust collaboration with Paragon Medical. Offering 24 pathways, the Academy collaborates with more than 300 industry and employer partners. Unlike conventional career centers with half-day instruction, the district's comprehensive high school provides training opportunities for all students, scheduling CTE classes across 1-3 periods.

The Whitko Career Academy provides students with personalized support and diverse WBL opportunities. In one-on-one meetings, students discuss career goals with a staff member. Students actively use their employability skills by initiating a call to express interest and discover potential opportunities with the employer. Each semester sees an average of over 70 WBL placements, with staff members following up to monitor student progress and maintain relationships. Employers play a role in the grading process as well, giving students real-time feedback that can develop their technical and employability skills.

### PATHWAYS CTE COOPERATIVE:

Pathways CTE Cooperative offers 14 programs across Whitley County Consolidated, Fairfield Community Schools, and Wawasee Community School Corporations. Pathways has great buy-in from the community and support students with investments and donations and offering WBL opportunities. One of their strongest employer partners is Polywood, a prominent local employer.

Through the collaboration with Polywood, Wawasee students gain access to a range of opportunities, including internships, school-to-work programs, and annual job fairs. Notably, the CTE students achieve considerable success in their internships, with around half transitioning to full-time positions and the remaining half pursuing higher education while continuing to intern with Polywood during summers. Looking towards the future, Wawasee and Polywood are partnering to launch an academy in the 2024-2025 school year. This unique initiative will provide Wawasee High School students with on-site manufacturing training and WBL experiences. The first year of the academy is anticipated to accommodate 6-8 students, with plans for growth to approximately 12 students in each class.

### WARSAW AREA CAREER CENTER:

Warsaw Area Career Center serves high school students in Warsaw Community Schools and Tippecanoe Valley School Corporation. With a future-focused approach, Warsaw Community Schools is dedicated to supporting students in their long-term career aspirations and goals. Warsaw offers comprehensive career exploration activities for all grade levels, designed to prepare students for high-demand opportunities within the local community. At the elementary level, local employers visit classrooms beginning in kindergarten. In middle school, students engage in the "Discover Me" program with OrthoWorx, participating in tours to gain insights into various programs and spending a week immersed in curriculum learning. Additionally, middle school students visit industry partners, including CTE classes at Ivy Tech, providing a firsthand look at the working environment of different careers.

In high school, students enroll in college and career exploration classes. In their senior year, students have a capstone experience, involving industry internships that offer practical insights and hands-on experience in their chosen fields. Students at the career center have a half-day program of instruction and the second half of the day is with local industry, many of those partners hire students for summer work. After high school, many students pursue additional training, employers encourage their pursuit of additional education.

Warsaw adopted creative methods to align with student interests and address local talent needs. In the past, there was a lack of student interest in machining, an occupation in high demand in the region. To address this mismatch, the curriculum was reorganized so students in pathways like machining could develop transferable skills, enhancing their competitive edge in the local industry. In the 2023-2024 school year, there is a record-breaking 150 students earning credits in both welding and machining, effectively meeting the demand of local employers. Students at the Warsaw Area Career Center can participate in the RAMP program, providing experiential learning opportunities with employer partners such as Instrumental Machine & Development (IMD), Medartis, Precision Medical Technologies, and Zimmer Biomet.



# CTE Gaps in the Two-County Region

While the two-county region boasts a strong foundation of CTE programs bolstered by partnerships with key industry players, there remains some gaps and areas for improvement within the technical education ecosystem. Stakeholder insights and the CTE data analysis have pinpointed specific shortcomings that, if addressed, could enhance the efficacy of CTE offerings and better serve the region's economic and educational objectives.

## Employers have different perspectives on the value of secondary CTE training.

The two-county region is home to globally renowned companies, specifically in orthopedics manufacturing. Each employer requires specific machines, equipment, and skills for success, prompting the need for in-house training to meet these demands. While this approach meets business needs, recruitment can lead to employers placing a higher value on candidates who exhibit eagerness and a willingness to learn rather than their related experience and technical aptitude. As many CTE programs teach technical skills, the development of employability skills often occurs through experience and is challenging to teach in a high school setting. This results in a disconnect between CTE pathways designed to prepare students for the local workforce and the specific skills demanded by employers.

Additionally, employers' internal training can unintentionally discourage students from seeking further education after high school. Employer's internal training opportunities closely align with the curriculum offered at training centers and higher education institutions. This encourages employed students to actively participate and persist in their employer's training programs over external postsecondary training, as the content is more relevant to their work, and they are compensated for the training hours. In contrast, employers in different communities, without similar in-house training, encourage employees to pursue training at Ivy Tech due to the perceived value of completing the program.

A major local employer outlined their internal training process, which involves a tailored curriculum and designated training spaces for various job positions. Upon completing the training, employees receive an internal credential, wage increase, and are eligible for the next level of training. This internal training facilitates quick internal promotions, allowing employees to progress from an entry-level role to advanced positions within 6-12 months, resulting in a 20-25% pay increase from their initial starting point.



## Employers face difficulties in effectively supporting students involved in WBL because it requires extra time and resources.

When considering offering WBL experiences to high school students, employers often express concerns about potential restrictions, such as liabilities and child labor laws. Even when schools provide support and resources, employers continue to express concerns related to additional administrative workload, oversight related to age, training costs, potential mistakes by trainees, uncertainty regarding post-training employment.

"We've hired high school kids in the past and it was fine. And then we got a call (from the State) last year who said that we weren't doing it correctly in terms of age and documentation. So, from then, we were like, well, never mind."

It can also be challenging for employers to engage in student career exploration. Not only do they want to invest in local talent, but there needs to be a clear way to engage and demonstrate a value-add when employers are investing their time and resources. Occasionally, industry partners may lack clarity about the identity and structure of CTE delivery, impacting their engagement.

**Students face inconsistencies in access to CTE pathways and WBL opportunities.**

WBL provides high school students with valuable real-world experience, and a deeper understanding of industry demands, preparing students for success in the workforce. WBL coordinators are instrumental to student success, assisting students in identifying their interests, and enabling these experiences. The WBL coordinator strengthens relationships with employers, and fosters connections among students, schools, and other employers. However, as more students enroll in CTE and districts expand student WBL opportunities, challenges arise. WBL coordinators, faced with more students, must create additional opportunities, potentially causing students to rely on their own networks. While WBL is highly beneficial for students, its availability is often related to existing connections.

**In rural CTE districts, students encounter limitations in accessing CTE pathways.**

Students in rural CTE districts face challenges related to transportation, schedules, and course availability when trying to access CTE pathways. The extended commute times, sometimes lasting up to 45 minutes one way, take up a substantial portion of a student's day, affecting instructional hours. Coordinating activities across schools with varying schedules and organization poses additional challenges, impacting program enrollment and availability. To address transportation and logistical challenges, students tend to enroll in programs at their home school. However, home schools often offer fewer options compared to CTE centers due to constraints such as limited availability of qualified instructors, outdated equipment, and sufficient student interest in specific subject areas. This may lead to students participating in a CTE pathway in which they have little interest in simply to satisfy their Box 3 graduation requirement.



# CTE Challenges in the Two-County Region

Acknowledging gaps in the CTE ecosystem is crucial to enhancing technical education. Transitioning from the identification of these gaps to a broader discussion, it is essential to navigate through the complex challenges and emerging opportunities facing CTE programs. This approach presents a comprehensive perspective essential for developing a robust and adaptive CTE ecosystem.

**Offering new CTE pathways for high-skill, high-demand industries is cost-prohibitive for schools.**

The primary source of funding for CTE programs comes from the state, covering costs of staffing, materials, and other essential components of the programming. Despite this, initiating new training programs for high-wage, high-demand pathways including essential equipment and materials for specialized areas such as Industry 4.0 - Smart Manufacturing, Precision Machining, and Welding Technology can be prohibitively expensive. For this training to be available, CTE programs rely on local investment and donations to secure materials. Local employers have extended their support by generously donating their used equipment to schools. However, this practice results in students learning on equipment that does not meet industry standards.

"Our local industry has done a wonderful job giving us hand-me-downs, but the problem is a hand-me-down is not industry ready. We're working on one or two generation old equipment, and a lot of times even if we invest in a CNC machine, I know it can easily be between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000."

**A comprehensive strategy for talent pipeline development is essential for regional partners to work towards shared goals.**

The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges as it disrupted the usual avenues for student engagement. As employers navigated the uncertainties brought about by the pandemic, this led to a halt in student internships, tours, and classroom talks. Even when businesses resumed normal operations, they faced additional hurdles, including changes in staff, transitions in ownership, and adapting to new conditions post-shutdown. In the aftermath of the pandemic, employers, schools, and the community must reconnect and align on the current post-pandemic workforce landscape. By collaborating and gaining a collective understanding of talent availability and demand, the region can effectively create a unified strategy to address local workforce needs.

"There's a Warsaw City Plan, there's a Winona Lake City Plan, there's a Connections Corridor Plan, I think what may be missing is (the mindset that) ... 'we're going to make something happen.'"

"That could be very challenging for businesses and leaders to step out of the day-to-day to think about the long-term strategy... that's the way it's been for how many years... It doesn't affect your day-to-day net profitability but it's something you know that you're looking at 5-10 years down the road".



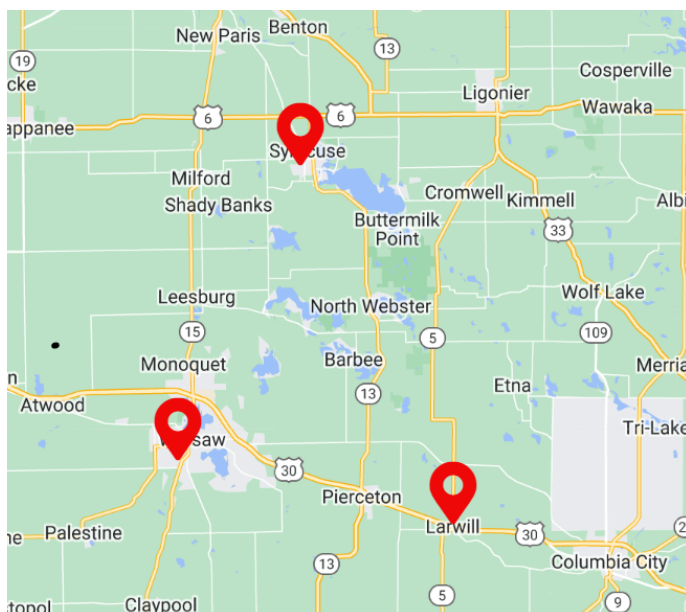
### Multiple CTE centers and districts contribute to a scattering of resources and financial investments.

Under Indiana law, a minimum of 60% of Perkins funding is designated for secondary education programs, specifically targeting CTE Districts that facilitate CTE programs in high schools.<sup>29</sup> These programs are primarily financed through a blend of state and federal sources, with significant federal contributions coming from the Carl D. Perkins CTE (Perkins V) grant. This grant aims to enhance the quality of CTE programs by supporting innovative instructional practices and ensuring students have access to modern equipment and facilities.

CTE Districts, which are partnerships among local school corporations to offer comprehensive CTE programs, receive Perkins V funding based on specific funding formulas. These formulas are designed to allocate additional resources to districts that serve a higher proportion of students with greater needs, ensuring equitable access to quality CTE education. However, it's important to note that Perkins V funding comes with restrictions, particularly excluding the use of funds for capital expenses, as well as intensive reporting requirements, including comprehensive local needs assessments (CLNAs) that are due every two years.

The two-county region is divided into three CTE districts:

- CTE District #12 (Warsaw Area Career Center),
- CTE District #13 (Pathways CTE Cooperative), and
- CTE District #51 (Whitko Career Academy).<sup>30</sup>



In February 2024, WCCS initiated a notable step by applying to form a separate, new CTE district, a move that could alter the structure of CTE in the two-county region. This decision to seek independence as a CTE district represents WCCS's ambition to directly tailor and enhance CTE offerings to meet the specific needs of its students and the local community. The introduction of a potential fourth CTE district to the region invites a discussion on the broader implications for regional collaboration and resource allocation within the existing CTE ecosystem.

The division of the region into three (and possibly four) separate CTE districts complicates the initiation and management of region-wide initiatives and collaborations. While the allocation of Perkins funding across these districts is intended to support their unique needs based on student demographics and enrollment sizes, it also means that resources, including time and capacity, are stretched thin as each district manages its own partnerships with employers. With each CTE district operating independently, complete with its own director and reporting requirements, the effort to manage these relationships becomes a significant administrative burden. Employers looking to engage with CTE programs face the additional complexity of navigating partnerships across multiple districts, rather than dealing with a single entity that could streamline and oversee all such relationships within the region, akin to the model employed by the West Central CTE Cooperative in Montgomery County, Indiana.

This fragmentation not only dilutes the potential for impactful employer engagements but also hinders the region's ability to unite behind shared talent development objectives. While the current setup allows for CTE classes to be offered in proximity to their respective sending schools and facilitates cross-regional partnerships, such as the Pathways CTE partnership with Fairfield Junior/Senior High School, it significantly impedes the collective pursuit of strategic goals. Overcoming these barriers is important for CTE districts to effectively collaborate, leveraging shared resources and aligning efforts to meet the broader talent development needs of the region. By fostering unified strategies and partnerships, CTE districts can more efficiently utilize their resources, enhance the quality of education provided, and more effectively contribute to the region's economic development goals.

29 - IC 20-20-38-12

30 - <https://iacted.org/directors/#grid-list>

**The introduction of Graduation Pathways for the Class of 2023 and subsequent classes, along with legislative amendments affecting the use of the ASVAB as a graduation pathway, may lead schools to direct students towards CTE pathways that may not match their career interests, simply to fulfill graduation requirements.**

Beginning with the Class of 2023, and with the ability for students from the classes of 2019-2022 to “opt-in,” Indiana high school students are required to fulfill at least one pathway in three distinct areas: earning a high school diploma, demonstrating employability skills, and exhibiting postsecondary-ready competencies. Table 16 below shows the breakdown of which pathway the Class of 2022 used for graduation.

**TABLE 16: GRADUATION PATHWAY BOX 3 BREAKDOWN, CLASS OF 2022<sup>31</sup>**

	GQE	HONORS DIPLOMA	ACT	SAT	ASVAB	INDUSTRY CERT.	CTE CONCEN- TRATOR	AP/IB/DUAL CREDIT	LOCALLY CREATED PATHWAY	WAIVER	TOTAL GRADS
<b>REGION TOTALS</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,088</b>
<b>Kosciusko County Total</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>753</b>
Tippecanoe Valley High School	0	42	0	0	10	0	49	15	0	0	116
Warsaw Community High School	186	0	0	0	36	0	257	0	0	0	479
Wawasee High School	0	74	0	0	31	0	53	0	0	0	158
<b>Whitley County Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>335</b>
Churubusco High School	39	0	0	0	0	0	37	0	0	0	76
Columbia High School	0	14	0	0	73	0	58	10	0	0	155
Whitko Career Academy	27	10	0	0	39	0	28	0	0	0	104

In 2022, a significant 23.2% of high school graduates in the two-county region achieved graduation by passing the English 10 and Algebra 1 Graduation Qualifying Exams, commonly known as ISTEP. This cohort was the final group to use this assessment as a graduation pathway, compelling schools to explore new avenues for nearly a quarter of their graduating students moving forward.

Additionally, 17.4% of graduates met their graduation requirements by taking the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and achieving a qualifying score on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) for military entrance. The enactment of HEA 1635, which now requires a letter of intent to enlist in the military for the ASVAB to qualify as a graduation pathway, is anticipated to decrease the attractiveness of this option. This legislative shift presents a considerable hurdle for high schools in the two counties, nudging them to identify other Box 3 pathways. With 44.3% of graduates already relying on CTE programs to graduate in 2022, the pressure on these programs to expand and accept more students could intensify.

This growing reliance on CTE pathways could lead to challenges, including the potential for students to enroll in CTE courses that align more with graduation needs than their personal career interests. Schools face the twin challenges of addressing the high initial costs associated with starting and maintaining CTE programs and the difficulty in recruiting qualified CTE instructors. Furthermore, with CTE classes nearing or at full capacity, schools may find it increasingly difficult to meet the heightened demand. There is a risk that this could not only strain resources but also inadvertently result in students participating in CTE classes that may not best serve their individual career aspirations, all in pursuit of fulfilling graduation requirements.

31 - Indiana Graduates Prepared to Succeed (GPS) Dashboard. Indiana Department of Education. <https://indianagps.doe.in.gov/>



# Recommendations

**Develop a region-wide talent development and retainment strategy that everyone can rally behind.**

To improve talent development and retention in the two-county region, establishing a cohesive, region-wide strategy is essential. Such a strategy, developed through collaboration among key stakeholders, would address the fragmented approach currently in place, as revealed by discussions with employers, workforce and economic development partners, and school administrators. Drawing inspiration from the previous Dual Career Program by the Kosciusko Economic Development Corporation (KEDCO)<sup>32</sup>, the focus of this new strategy should be on incorporating the technical education ecosystem, particularly CTE programs, into a comprehensive regional plan. This integration ensures that the educational framework aligns with and supports broader economic and workforce development goals in the region.

A unified strategy ensures that CTE courses are directly aligned with the needs of local employers, providing students with valuable work-based learning opportunities that prepare them for the workforce. It also promotes the standardization of terminology and resources, leading to more effective communication and cooperation across different organizations. This shared vision and collective objectives will optimize resource utilization and maximize the impact on talent development.

By working together, stakeholders can achieve greater efficiency in funding and resource allocation, avoiding the pitfalls of disjointed efforts and independent goals. This collaborative approach also supports long-term planning and sustainability, adapting to evolving industry demands and workforce trends. Additionally, it is important to ensure inclusivity in this strategy, providing access to CTE and workforce development opportunities for all community segments.

## BEST PRACTICE SHOWCASE:

### Grow Allen<sup>33</sup>

The Grow Allen initiative in Allen County, Indiana emerging approach of comprehensive career path development. This initiative, which is in the initial stages of implementation, has successfully rallied support from all four public school districts in Allen County. Its broad acceptance and implementation signify a collective commitment to enhancing career readiness and opportunities for students across the region. The initiative is noteworthy for its strategic focus on aligning educational pathways with local labor market trends, thereby fostering a workforce that is well-prepared to meet the region's economic needs.

<sup>32</sup> - Dual Career Program. KEDCO. <https://www.kosciuskoedc.com/talent/career-support/>

<sup>33</sup> - Grow Allen: Building a Collaborative Path to Student Success and Economic Prosperity in Northeast Indiana. Ambassador Enterprises. <https://ambassador-enterprises.com/grow-allen-building-a-collaborative-path-to-student-success-and-economic-prosperity-in-northeast-indiana/>

**Create an intermediary that would serve both Kosciusko and Whitley counties  
by helping employers actively and intentionally engage within the CTE ecosystem.**

Given the division of the two-county region into three (possibly soon-to-be four) separate CTE districts, the current approach to integrating employers into CTE programs is resource intensive. This often leads to isolated or relationship-dependent connections that disproportionately benefit certain schools, programs, or employers, rather than the entire region. To address this and promote more equitable access across the two counties, it is recommended to establish a regional intermediary entity. This entity would serve all six public high schools, acting as a centralized facilitator to efficiently incorporate employers into the broader CTE ecosystem.

An intermediary organization<sup>34</sup> would bring industry-specific expertise and support, effectively coordinating partnerships and administrative responsibilities, particularly aiding small and medium-sized enterprises that might lack the resources to independently operate such programs. Additionally, the intermediary could assist with instructional and supportive services, ensuring a comprehensive and cohesive approach to technical education.

The proposed intermediary would not only provide a platform for collaboration but would also help in articulating and maximizing the return-on-investment for employers, thereby enhancing their engagement. By reimagining the role of an existing intermediary already functioning as a convener for employers, this strategy could further strengthen industry-education linkages and buy-in.

Interestingly, in October 2023, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education introduced capacity building grants of up to \$250,000 for organizations aspiring to become regional intermediaries<sup>35</sup>. Should this grant opportunity recur in 2024, it is strongly advised that stakeholders in the two-county region collaborate to identify and support an organization to apply for this grant. The focus should be on creating a system that benefits all high schools in the two counties, moving beyond the limitations of supporting only specific schools, programs, or employers. This approach would ensure a more inclusive, efficient, and effective integration of employers into the CTE framework, ultimately benefiting the entire region's workforce development.

## BEST PRACTICE SHOWCASE:

### Talent Bound by EmployIndy

Talent Bound is EmployIndy's initiative to provide the students in Marion County access to authentic career-connected learning experiences. By leveraging a network of local employers, industry professionals can engage in activities that help students make informed decisions. The Talent Bound model includes three phases of career-connected learning including career exploration, engagement, and experience. The benefit for employers is that Talent Bound facilitated these connections between employers, educators, and students. They provide a WBL toolkit<sup>36</sup> clear descriptions of activities, specifying the recommended time and resources, offering options for activities and lesson plans, explaining the benefits, and addressing any questions about additional expectations.

34 - What is an intermediary? ApprenticeshipUSA. <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/employers/registered-apprenticeship-program/build/join#:~:text=An%20intermediary%20provides%20industry%20and,not%20have%20the%20capacity%20to>

35 - Request for Proposal: Intermediary Capacity Building Grant. Indiana Commission for Higher Education. <https://www.in.gov/che/files/Capacity-Building-Grant-Final.pdf>

36 - Career-connected Learning Activities. Talent Bound. <https://www.talentbound.org/activities.html>

**Develop a toolkit to help schools and employers understand and navigate work-based learning opportunities with students under the age of 18.**

To effectively incorporate more employers into the CTE ecosystem in the two-county region, it is recommended that the intermediary organization (or other stakeholders) develops a comprehensive toolkit. This toolkit would aid schools and employers in understanding and navigating work-based learning opportunities, especially for students under the age of 18. Drawing inspiration from models like Talent Bound's work-based learning toolkit, this resource could provide local employers with clear guidelines on how to engage meaningfully with students' career-connected learning.

The toolkit should serve as a detailed guide, facilitating interactions among schools, students, and employers. It would streamline the planning, organization, and supervision of work-based learning experiences, making the process more manageable and effective for all parties involved.

**RECOMMENDED COMPONENTS OF THE TOOLKIT:**

1. **Resources for Screening, Placement, and Onboarding Support:** This would include guidelines for selecting suitable candidates, placing them in appropriate roles, and supporting them through the onboarding process to ensure a smooth transition into the work environment.
2. **Employability Skills and Professional Training Resources:** Development of resources focused on enhancing student employability skills and foundational professional training. This would prepare students for the workplace and align their skills with employer expectations.
3. **Bridging CTE Pathways to Employer-Specific Credentialing:** Connecting CTE pathways with specific employer credentialing and training requirements. This ensures that the skills and knowledge students acquire in CTE programs are directly applicable to the needs of local employers.

The development and implementation of such a toolkit by the intermediary organization would significantly enhance the capacity of local employers to engage with the CTE ecosystem. It would lead to high-quality experiential learning opportunities for students, thereby enriching their educational experience and better preparing them for their future careers.

### Bring youth apprenticeship to the region to help develop and retain talent.

Adopting a youth apprenticeship program in the two-county region, modeled after the successful NE INFAME and Marion County's Modern Apprenticeship Program (MAP), holds the potential to substantially improve educational and career opportunities for high school students. By emulating these models, the program would not only enhance the skillset of students but also foster strong connections between them and regional employers. This strategy could significantly boost the likelihood of students choosing to remain and work in the two-county region after graduation, thereby strengthening the local workforce and community ties.

Best Practice Example- Modern Apprenticeship (MAP) program<sup>37</sup>, is a joint effort by EmployIndy and Ascend Indiana in Indianapolis, offers an in-depth apprenticeship targeting high-demand industries. Beginning in junior year, students embark on a two- to three-year program that includes paid work experience, earning both high school and college credits, and obtaining professional credentials. Fields such as IT, healthcare, and manufacturing are targeted, aligning with current market needs to ensure the relevance and value of the skills students gain. This program is especially beneficial in addressing career readiness equity gaps, providing diverse students with practical skills necessary in today's economy.

Similarly, the Indiana FAME model<sup>38</sup> integrates hands-on training with academic learning over five semesters. Students earn wages while working towards their diploma and college credits, focusing on skills, behaviors, and competencies essential in advanced manufacturing.

The Youth Apprenticeship Accelerator program<sup>39</sup>, supported by Ascend Indiana and funded by the Walton Family Foundation and PAYA, is a key resource for expanding apprenticeship models. By accessing this funding, the two-county region could develop apprenticeship programs tailored to local workforce needs, fostering individual student growth, and contributing to regional economic development.

Adopting a youth apprenticeship model in the two-county region represents a strategic investment in the future workforce because this model is especially advantageous for students from varied backgrounds, ensuring they receive compensation for their apprenticeship roles. The model mandates a three-year commitment—two years during high school and one following graduation—enabling participants to forge substantial professional connections independently of their personal networks. Such a structured engagement not only empowers students with invaluable work experience but also nurtures a competent and self-assured workforce equipped to navigate the demands of the contemporary economy. By bridging the gap between education and employment, this model offers profound benefits to students, businesses, and the community at large, marking an advancement in the region's educational and economic strategy.

## BEST PRACTICE SHOWCASE:

### Elkhart's Modern Apprenticeship

Elkhart County's Modern Apprenticeship Program (MAP) is a significant step toward enhancing educational and career opportunities for high school students. The Modern Apprenticeship (MAP) program<sup>40</sup>, an initiative from CareerWise Elkhart County, offers a comprehensive apprenticeship for high school students in participating local school districts, focusing on high-demand industries. Starting in their junior year, students engage in a two- to three-year program that encompasses paid work experience, along with earning high school and college credits, and gaining professional credentials. The fields covered, such as IT, healthcare, and manufacturing, are carefully chosen to align with current market demands, ensuring that the skills students acquire are relevant and valuable. This program is designed to bridge the equity gap in career readiness, particularly for students from diverse backgrounds, providing them with a unique blend of real-world skills that are essential in the post-COVID economic landscape.

37 - EmployIndy and Ascend Indiana launch modern apprenticeship program for high school students in high-demand fields. EmployIndy. <https://employindy.org/employindy-and-ascend-indiana-launch-modern-apprenticeship-program-for-high-school-students-in-high-demand-fields/>

38 - Change Your Life With FAME USA. <https://fame-usa.com/fame-program-for-students/>

39 - Ascend Indiana receives \$2.45 million in grants to advance youth apprenticeships statewide. TechPoint. <https://techpoint.org/digital-innovation/ascend-indiana-receives-2-45-million-in-grants-to-advance-youth-apprenticeships-statewide/>

40 - CareerWise Elkhart County. How it works. <https://www.careerwiseelkhartcounty.org/why-it-works/>

**Embed entrepreneurialism within all CTE pathways in Kosciusko and Whitley county schools to support the region's thriving small business sector.**

Given the significant role small businesses play in the economy of the two-county region, with over 60% of businesses employing fewer than 10 people, there is a pressing need to support and foster entrepreneurial skills among high school students through CTE pathways.

The predominance of businesses with fewer than 10 employees, including a substantial number of microenterprises with 1 to 4 employees (31.1%, totaling 1,220 businesses) and those with 5 to 9 employees (30.3%, totaling 1,189 businesses), underscores the entrepreneurial spirit that characterizes the two-county region. This environment presents a unique opportunity to embed entrepreneurialism within different CTE pathways, equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to either start their own businesses or contribute innovatively to existing small businesses within a variety of industries. This approach is not only vital for supporting the large number of microenterprises that form the backbone of the local economy but also for ensuring the economic resilience and sustainability of the region by supporting the next generation of entrepreneurs.

**Engage with the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) to advocate for the mandatory inclusion of CTE student demographic data on Form 30A.**

The lack of comprehensive demographic data in the Form 30A reports, especially concerning CTE students with disabilities and those living at or below the federal poverty level, significantly hinders efforts to ensure equitable access to CTE courses for these vital subgroups. The current reporting requirements for Indiana schools, which mandate the annual submission of CTE student enrollment figures via Form 30A without necessitating a breakdown of student demographics, obscure the full picture of who is benefiting from CTE programs.

To remedy this critical oversight, it is imperative that stakeholders within the two-county region take proactive steps to lobby for essential legislative changes. These changes would require schools to report detailed demographic information on CTE students as part of their Form 30A submissions. Engaging with the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) is a strategic move to advocate for the mandatory inclusion of such demographic data in the Form 30A report.

By ensuring that demographic information is a required component of CTE reporting, stakeholders can gain a more nuanced understanding of program accessibility and identify any disparities that may exist. This comprehensive approach to data collection and reporting is important to developing targeted strategies to address gaps in access and participation, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and equitable CTE ecosystem in the two-county region.

**Review detailed student data to ensure subgroups of students (such as Hispanic students) are accessing and enrolling in CTE programs at the same ratio as their peers.**

The analysis of the Form 30A data for the 2022-2023 school year reveals a concerning trend in the representation of Hispanic students within CTE programs in the two-county region. Despite comprising approximately 14% of the total high school student population in these counties, Hispanic students account for only 9% of CTE enrollment. This discrepancy suggests a potential gap in access to these critical educational resources. CTE classes play a pivotal role in equipping high school students with the skills and knowledge necessary for immediate entry into the workforce upon graduation. They offer practical, hands-on experience and industry-relevant training, which can be valuable for students who do not pursue further education. Therefore, ensuring equitable access to CTE programs for all subgroups, including Hispanic students, those living at or below the federal poverty line, and students with disabilities, is imperative.

However, the Form 30A data currently lacks consistent information on other subgroups besides race and ethnicity, which limits a full understanding of the enrollment disparities. To address this, it is recommended that stakeholders in the two-county region, including schools, CTE districts, and local industry partners, undertake a detailed analysis of CTE enrollment for all subgroups. This analysis should aim to uncover any underlying reasons for the observed enrollment imbalances.

In developing strategies to bridge these gaps, several approaches should be considered:

- **Outreach and Awareness Programs:** Implement targeted initiatives to raise awareness about CTE programs among underrepresented groups. This could involve community engagement, informational sessions, and collaborations with local organizations that work with these subgroups.
- **Data Improvement and Monitoring:** Ensure consistent and comprehensive data collection on CTE enrollment for all subgroups to regularly monitor and address disparities.
- **Feedback and Continuous Improvement:** Establish feedback mechanisms with current and former CTE students from these subgroups to understand their experiences and improve the programs accordingly.

By implementing these strategies, the two-county region can work towards a more inclusive and effective CTE ecosystem that not only addresses current disparities but also strengthens the overall workforce readiness of all students.



### Develop virtual options for work-based learning.

To overcome accessibility challenges in the two-county region, innovative approaches are necessary. One such approach is the development of remote work-based learning (WBL) experiences. This would enable students to engage virtually with employers for internships or project-based learning, broadening the scope of interaction beyond physical limitations. Remote WBL is particularly advantageous for smaller employers who may not have the resources for on-site WBL, and it opens the door for collaboration with a diverse range of industries.

The shift to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic has already led many employers to adopt and refine remote work solutions. While traditional webinar instruction has limitations, adopting a 'learn-by-doing' and 'learn-by-teaching' approach can enhance the effectiveness of remote training and upskilling<sup>41</sup>. This learner-centric model is valuable for companies looking to effectively train employees remotely.

Implementing remote WBL in the two-county region may not be the perfect solution, but it offers a valuable opportunity. It allows students to interact with employers from different regions, thereby increasing the variety of employers engaged in the education process and enhancing students' acquisition of employability skills. This expanded network and skill set would be beneficial for students in whichever career path they choose, making remote WBL an essential component in the region's strategy to prepare students for the future workforce.

## BEST PRACTICE SHOWCASE:

### Junior Achievement Here to Career Platform

In the realm of virtual work-based learning (WBL) options, a notable best practice example is the utilization of the Junior Achievement Here to Career Platform<sup>42</sup> by schools in Tippecanoe Valley. This innovative platform offers a seamless connection between students and area employers, revolutionizing the way young people explore and engage with career opportunities.

Businesses participate by registering on the Here to Career platform, often involving a fee, which then enables them to be accessible to a wider student audience. This model not only provides businesses with a direct line to potential future employees but also supports the platform's sustainability and growth.

Students in the Tippecanoe Valley actively engage with this platform. They start by taking an assessment or career inventory, designed to understand their interests, skills, and aspirations. Based on their assessment results, the platform intelligently matches them with area employers whose needs and opportunities align with the students' profiles. This personalized approach ensures that students relate to relevant and meaningful career paths.

The Here to Career platform exemplifies a best practice in virtual WBL by offering a practical, scalable solution to connect students with real-world career opportunities. It addresses key challenges in work-based learning, such as accessibility and relevance, by leveraging technology to create a dynamic, user-friendly interface between the future workforce and current employers. The success seen in Tippecanoe Valley serves as a model for other regions looking to enhance their WBL offerings and better prepare students for the workforce in an increasingly digital world.

<sup>41</sup> - World Economic Forum. How COVID-19 will reshape learning and work.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/04/future-remote-working-digital-learning-covid-19/>

<sup>42</sup> - JA HERE TO CAREER™. Junior Achievement of Northern Indiana. <https://northernindiana.ja.org/programs/opportunity/ja-here-to-career>

# Conclusion



This report has thoroughly examined the CTE ecosystem in the two-county region, identifying both the strengths and areas for improvement within the current framework. The recommendations provided aim to address the gaps in equitable access to CTE programs, enhance the alignment of these programs with the regional labor market, and foster a robust entrepreneurial spirit among students. The critical role of small businesses in the local economy underscores the need for a strategic focus on entrepreneurship within CTE pathways, ensuring that students are equipped with the skills and mindset necessary to contribute to and thrive in the region's predominantly small business environment.

The proposed strategies, including the integration of entrepreneurial curriculum within CTE pathways, the establishment of partnerships with local businesses, and the development of support structures for student ventures, represent a holistic approach to enhancing the CTE ecosystem. By adopting these recommendations, stakeholders in the two-county region can ensure that CTE programs not only meet the current needs of students and employers but also anticipate and adapt to future economic trends.

Moving forward, the commitment and collaboration of all regional stakeholders—educators, business leaders, policymakers, and community members—will be important in implementing these recommendations and achieving the shared goal of a vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive economic future for the two-county region. This report serves as a blueprint for action, calling upon the collective efforts of the community to champion the cause of career education and training. Together, Kosciusko and Whitley counties can collectively create a CTE ecosystem that empowers every student to realize their potential, supports the growth of local businesses, and contributes to the prosperity of the region.

