

CREDIT TO CAREERS

An Initiative of the



Request for Proposals

Credit to Careers: An Initiative to Expand High-Quality CTE Dual Enrollment

Thanks to the generous support of the Walton Family Foundation, the [College in High School Alliance](#) (CHSA) is releasing a Request for Proposals to recruit **seven states for a 2.5-year project** to be part of the **Credit to Careers Initiative**.

- **The opportunity:** CHSA will select seven states for a 2.5-year initiative (January 2027–July 2029) to map, design, and implement a statewide strategy for expanding high-quality career and technical education (CTE) dual enrollment, with a goal of increasing enrollment and completion.
- **Who can apply:** All states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories are eligible. A single lead agency that holds or shares decision-making authority over CTE dual enrollment policy, such as a governor's office, state education agency, higher education authority, or state CTE agency, applies on behalf of a cross-agency team.
- **What states receive:** Dedicated coaching from a CHSA partner organization, data systems support from Education Analytics, fully covered travel to cohort convenings, and access to an Implementation Fund of approximately \$150,000 per state beginning in 2028.
- **Deadline & Key Dates:** A [webinar for interested applicants](#) will be held on **Wednesday, November 4**. Applications are due through the [online application form](#) by 11:59 PM Pacific on **Friday, December 4, 2026**. Finalists will be invited to interview. Selected states will be notified in January 2027.
- **Application guide:** This RFP is accompanied by an [Application Guide](#) that includes more detail on this opportunity and the project to help you decide whether it's the right fit for your state.

The Opportunity

Across recent interviews CHSA has conducted with state policy leaders, one theme is widespread and consistent: states want to expand the integration of CTE and dual enrollment that gives students on-ramps to degrees and credentials in specific pathways and programs of study. To do this, they are not starting from scratch. States have invested in expanding the reach and quality of both dual enrollment and CTE. And strong CTE dual enrollment programs are already operating across the country, powered by committed educators, strong K–12/postsecondary partnerships, and a mix of federal, state, and private funding. What is often missing is the statewide strategy that catalogs these efforts, aligns them with the state's broader dual enrollment policy, priority Career Clusters, and attainment goals, and ensures they reach every student who could benefit. Now is the moment for states to bring these strands together and make these experiences the expectation everywhere, not the exception in a few places.

The payoff of intentionally investing in CTE dual enrollment is substantial. Research from the [Community College Research Center](#) finds that students who took a combination of dual enrollment and CTE courses experienced significant earnings gains by age 24 compared to students who participated in only one or the other, evidence that thoughtfully aligning the two strategies matters for students' futures.

The Credit to Careers Initiative presents a critical opportunity for seven states to receive funding and support to develop a statewide CTE dual enrollment ecosystem and begin implementing a strategy to substantially expand dual enrollment participation and success in CTE pathways. Through building systems that expand the number of students who are completing dual enrollment courses as part of a CTE pathway or program of study, rather than limiting dual enrollment opportunities to students on traditional college paths or students taking isolated career-connected dual enrollment courses, states will be taking important steps towards expanding **high-quality CTE dual enrollment**.

Defining high-quality CTE dual enrollment

High-quality CTE dual enrollment is a deliberately designed, state-supported experience that in its ideal state is defined by intentional sequencing within a career pathway, credit that transfers and applies, rigorous career-connected instruction, formal K-12/postsecondary partnerships, advising and student supports, strategic and targeted access, and a shared vision backed by data and funding.

These are the conditions that we will be working with states to build, and are not expected to be in place when states apply. For a more detailed definition of **high-quality CTE dual enrollment**, see the Definitions section.

When set up in this way, high-quality CTE dual enrollment functions as an intentional component of a state's college and career readiness system rather than a standalone program. It works cohesively with a student's other college and career readiness experiences, such as work-based learning, career exploration coursework, and credentials of value, as well as a student's dual enrollment courses in general education subjects, so that each builds on the others toward a coherent postsecondary and career destination for every student. A state that builds this system is a state positioned to expand CTE dual enrollment deliberately, sustainably, and at scale. **Through the Credit to Careers Initiative, seven states will have the opportunity to build this system.**

For purposes of this RFP, CTE dual enrollment means college credit earned through enrollment in a postsecondary course and transcribed at the time the course is completed; it does not include articulated credit. States that utilize articulated credit are welcome to apply for this opportunity, but the focus of this project will be on expanding high-quality CTE dual enrollment. Full definitions appear at the end of this document. Selected states will work with CHSA to refine and operationalize the components of high-quality CTE dual enrollment in their own context, helping to shape a national framework that will emerge from this initiative.

The Benefits to Participating States

States that are selected to participate in the Credit to Careers Initiative will receive significant benefits from their participation, designed to position those states as national leaders in expanding high-quality CTE dual enrollment. States will develop and implement comprehensive strategies to expand participation in high-quality CTE dual enrollment aligned to the state's priority Career Clusters and

occupations with support from CHSA and its team of national dual enrollment, CTE, and data systems experts, and from the other states in the cohort. This will include states having the opportunity to work:

- **With Individualized Support:** Through direct coaching and individualized technical assistance from the College in High School Alliance, which will assign each state a dedicated coaching team from one of CHSA's partner organizations ([Achieving the Dream](#), [Advance CTE](#), [Jobs for the Future](#), and the [National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships](#)), working alongside our expert data partner [Education Analytics](#), to provide individualized support as they work to develop their strategy, assess and improve their CTE and dual enrollment data systems, and implement their strategy. Your coaching team will be made up of national experts at the forefront of thinking about dual enrollment, CTE, and education and workforce data policy, and who have direct experience working with states on advancing dual enrollment and CTE policy (CHSA has formally partnered in the last 6 years with 19 states through its previous technical assistance cohorts and direct state partnerships – see the “About CHSA” section below for more information.) We have worked with states all across the country with different needs, different political contexts, governance structures, funding systems, and priorities, and are confident that we can provide tailored, substantive support to your work that meets your needs. Your coaching team will be complemented by a broader array of experts across our national organizations who are ready to assist you. Your coaching team is your guide, your connector, and added capacity for your state team. Consider us part of your team and ready, willing, and able to assist in the direct work of the project.
- **Collaboratively:** Through a series of in-person and virtual convenings of the seven states of the Credit to Careers Initiative that advance the initiative's objectives and provide the states with milestone points to anchor their strategy development and implementation. Each state will be working towards the same set of objectives, which will provide the opportunity for a vibrant exchange of ideas and the opportunity to test emerging strategies with peers who can provide thoughtful advice. Where appropriate, CHSA will also draw on its relationships nationally to pull in support from states outside the cohort, helping you connect with the people you need nationally in order to advance your vision for high-quality CTE dual enrollment in your state.
- **As National Exemplars:** The cohort's work will inform a national framework and white paper on building state CTE dual enrollment systems, published by CHSA, positioning participating states as the models other states look to and giving them a platform to share what they have built. **By being part of the Credit to Careers Initiative, your state will become one of the national exemplars that other states will look to.**

Support in the first phases of the initiative takes the form of coaching, technical assistance, convenings, covered travel, and work with the state on assessing its data systems. Once states have completed their strategies to expand high-quality CTE dual enrollment in their states, they will gain access to an **Implementation Fund of approximately \$150,000 per state** to support the implementation of the strategy, anticipated to begin in early 2028. Implementation Funds will support budgeted activities that states identify in their strategies to meaningfully advance their work. CHSA may contract directly with the partners and providers states select, rather than issuing funds to state agencies, so states can put the support to work quickly without navigating state grant acceptance or procurement processes.

For more detailed information on the benefits of participating in this project, including the Implementation Fund, please see the [Application Guide](#).

What Participating States Will Do

The initiative runs from January 2027 through July 2029 and moves through three phases, each anchored by cohort convenings and supported throughout by the state's CHSA coaching team. States will undertake a design sprint in 2027 to map their CTE dual enrollment ecosystems and develop their CTE dual enrollment strategies, to allow implementation to begin in 2028 through the summer of 2029.

- **Phase 1: Map the CTE Dual Enrollment Ecosystem (January–July 2027).** With their coaching team and Education Analytics, states develop a CTE Dual Enrollment Asset Map: a deep, contextual picture of how CTE dual enrollment currently functions in the state, focused on the state's priority Career Clusters and/or occupations. This includes assessing existing CTE and dual enrollment data, mapping how federal (Perkins, ESSA) and state policy and funding are and could be used to strengthen CTE dual enrollment, how the state's CTE dual enrollment ecosystem is aligned or misaligned with the state's general dual enrollment policy ecosystem, and identifying challenges and gaps through stakeholder surveys, focus groups, and direct engagement with students.
- **Phase 2: Develop a CTE Dual Enrollment Strategy (August 2027–December 2027).** Using the Asset Map, states develop and publish a strategy to expand high-quality CTE dual enrollment. The strategy applies the high-quality definition to the state's context; sets 3-, 5-, and 10-year participation & completion targets aligned to the state's broader attainment priorities; lays out a data strategy for collecting and publicly reporting participation and outcomes (to the extent there are identified gaps); and identifies the policy, funding, and programmatic supports needed to close the gaps identified in the Asset Map, tested against the priority Career Clusters.
- **Phase 3: Implement the Strategy (January 2028–July 2029).** States begin implementing priority actions from their strategy, such as state guidance and toolkits, policy or regulatory changes, funding deployment, data system enhancements, or cross-agency agreements, with continued coaching and access to the Implementation Fund. States also develop a sustainability plan with the staffing and resources needed to carry the work forward beyond the end of the project period.

For more information on the cadence of the project and the contents of the three phases, please see the [Application Guide](#).

Expectations

To make the most of this experience, states should determine a lead point of contact who will be managing the state's participation in the Credit to Careers Initiative, and a relevant **working team** of representatives of other stakeholders who share governance of dual enrollment or have an important role to play in developing and implementing a strategy to expand high-quality CTE dual enrollment in the state. States should anticipate that the lead point of contact will devote a meaningful share of their time to the initiative, particularly during the asset mapping and strategy development phases, and should have the support of their leadership to do so. In addition to the working team, states will also identify a **leadership team** of relevant state-level leaders that will meet periodically throughout the project period to review and provide feedback to the working team to ensure the project remains aligned with the partners' objectives.

For the **working team**, this 2.5-year project will involve:

- Monthly 1-hour calls with the state's CHSA coaching team (at minimum, more as needed depending on the work) to discuss the work and next steps. The CHSA coaching team is also

available to support the state in advancing its work and completing its deliverables at the direction of the state.

- Working with the Education Analytics team in the first 12-18 months of the project to assess the state's CTE and dual enrollment data systems and plan improvements to ensure high-quality CTE dual enrollment participation and success can be appropriately measured.
- Participating in periodic virtual learning sessions to advance the work as a collaborative of states.
- Participating in three 1-2 day in-person convenings – two in 2027 and one in 2029. Travel and attendance expenses will be covered for team members. Additional convenings may be added in 2028 if project funds allow and it is strategic to bring the state teams together in person.
- Convening and engaging stakeholders, other relevant partners, and learners directly through surveys, focus groups, or a similar mechanism, to inform the state's CTE Dual Enrollment Asset Map.
- Developing and publishing a strategy to expand high-quality CTE dual enrollment in the state, to include a plan for how to collect, track, and report data on CTE dual enrollment participation.
- Developing a sustainability plan for the strategy, to include appropriate staffing and funding, to ensure its implementation continues beyond the end of the project period.
- Working among the state team and with the state's CHSA coaching team to implement the strategy.
- Quantifying CTE dual enrollment participation data beginning with a 2025–26 baseline, so that progress toward the state's targets can be tracked across the cohort, with progress towards disaggregation and collection of additional identified metrics that align with the state's priorities as part of the project.

For the **leadership team**, this project will involve:

- Periodically meeting to review the work and progress of the working team and provide appropriate feedback and guidance on a cadence appropriate to the project.
- Actively using their formal authority to move the work from planning to action, including championing the strategy within their agencies, removing barriers to implementation, and making the policy, budget, and staffing decisions needed to put it into practice.

For more information on the project expectations, including the working and leadership teams and how to think about them in your specific state context, please see the [Application Guide](#).

Project Outcomes

States will work towards achieving the following outcomes by the end of the project period (summer 2029) with CHSA's support:

- Complete their CTE dual enrollment strategy and implement priority actions identified in their plan.
- Increase the number of students enrolled in high-quality, intentional CTE dual enrollment coursework by 25% as a leading indicator for downstream success in increasing CTE dual enrollment completion.
- Increase student enrollment in high-quality CTE dual enrollment courses for one or more priority student groups.

- Establish and operationalize infrastructure to track the long-term outcomes aligned to their strategy and goals.
- Embed a focus on high-quality CTE dual enrollment expansion in strategic plans, state guidance, budgets, and/or staffing structures.
- Expand funding through available public and private means to support their CTE dual enrollment strategy.

These are an ambitious set of outcomes, but we are excited to partner with you and do everything we can together to make them a reality.

Eligibility

- This opportunity is open to all interested states, plus the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.
- Applications are submitted by a single lead applicant on behalf of a cross-agency state team, composed of a working team and a leadership team.
- The lead applicant must be able to demonstrate they have or share decision-making authority for policies impacting CTE dual enrollment in their state.
 - This can include, but is not limited to, the governor's office, state education agency, higher education governing authority, public system of higher education (two or four year), or career and technical education agency.
- Cross-agency participation in these engagements is required. At minimum, the working team should include all relevant agencies and personnel that share governance over CTE and dual enrollment, such as the State CTE Director, state education agency personnel with dual enrollment governance authority in K–12, and personnel with dual enrollment governance authority in higher education (two-year and four-year as appropriate). Teams should also include the state's CTE and dual enrollment data lead. They may also include representatives of business and industry from the selected priority Career Clusters, and partnerships with non-state intermediaries or non-profits, institutions of higher education, and school districts are encouraged where appropriate.

How to Apply

Interested states may apply using this [online application form](#). Applications are due by **Friday, December 4, 2026**. We accept one application per state, submitted by a lead applicant on behalf of the state's cross-agency team.

The application asks states to:

- **Introduce your state team.** Name the members of your working team and leadership team, describe each member's role and authority over CTE and dual enrollment, and explain why together they are the right group to develop and carry out your strategy.
- **Share your vision and how it connects to your state's priorities.** Describe what will be different for students in three years if the initiative succeeds, which existing statewide initiatives this work would advance, how CTE dual enrollment fits alongside your state's other college and career readiness experiences, and the biggest barriers to reaching the project's outcomes.

- **Identify your priority Career Clusters and/or occupations**, and who in your state has designated them as priorities. If your state has not yet identified priorities, you can select them for this project and explain your choice.
- **Describe your current policy landscape**, including how CTE dual enrollment is governed and funded, a recent policy change that shows your state's capacity to act, and the approvals the changes you might pursue would require.
- **Describe your data capacity**, including whether you can identify CTE dual enrollment students, what data you keep on programs of study, courses, and credentials, and who in your state most needs better CTE dual enrollment data.
- **Propose preliminary participation targets** for 3, 5, and 10 years, alongside your current baseline where known. Completion targets will be set later, as part of your strategy.
- **Describe your capacity and plans to sustain the work**, including the staff time your team will commit and any leadership transitions you expect.

You may also attach supporting documents, such as existing state plans, reports, or data. We do not ask for letters of commitment. Instead, finalists will be invited to interview the week of January 4, 2027, and we ask that at least one member of your leadership team attend.

The full set of application questions is included in the [Application Guide](#).

Is This Opportunity Right For Me?

There is a deeper discussion in the [Application Guide](#) about how you might think of this opportunity in your specific state context – do you feel like you're an advanced state who already has some of the fundamentals of this project in place? We think we can help you advance to even higher levels of success. Do you feel like you are a state with very few of these conditions in place but have the ambition to make big strides forward? We think we can help you take those big strides.

Regardless of how you see your state's current progress within the CTE dual enrollment ecosystem, we believe that successful applicants will be those who:

- **Show how expanding CTE dual enrollment advances the state's existing education and workforce agenda.** Applicants can explain how participating in the Credit to Careers Initiative aligns with and accelerates the state's current priorities (such as workforce development plans, postsecondary attainment goals, Perkins state plans, K-12 priorities, college and career readiness frameworks, or gubernatorial initiatives), and demonstrate, through their current policy architecture and recent successes in CTE and/or dual enrollment, that the state can translate a strategy into policy change, funding decisions, and cross-agency agreements within the project period.
- **Bring a cross-agency team with the authority to act.** The team assembles a working team and a leadership team comprising all relevant policy stakeholders, such as the State CTE Director, the K-12 and higher education officials who hold dual enrollment governance authority, the state's CTE and dual enrollment data lead, and other entities as appropriate. The leadership team comprises senior leaders at the relevant agencies with authority to provide support and direction to the project.
- **Anchor the work in priority Career Clusters and/or occupations the state has already identified.** Applicants select existing priority Career Clusters or occupations and show how expanding CTE dual enrollment in those fields advances the same statewide initiatives named

above rather than standing apart from them. If your state does not yet have priority Career Clusters and/or occupations identified, you are able to select some for the purposes of this project and justify your selection.

- **Have data infrastructure to see their starting point and measure growth.** Applicants have the building blocks of CTE and dual enrollment data to establish a credible baseline, can use it to give an honest picture of current participation, opportunities, and challenges, and a realistic path to addressing identified gaps and build the disaggregated reporting needed to track participation and long-term outcomes. No particular technical architecture or interoperability standard is required. CHSA may seek a cohort representing a range of data-system maturity levels and technical environments.
- **Set ambitious, credible participation targets and a plan to sustain them.** Applicants offer preliminary 3-, 5-, and 10-year targets for growing participation in high-quality CTE dual enrollment, and commit to the staffing, timelines, and leadership continuity needed to keep expansion moving beyond the project period. Completion targets will be set later, as part of each state's strategy.

States anticipating a leadership transition in early 2027 or during the project period should address in their application how the work will be sustained and how new leadership will be engaged. **An anticipated transition is not a barrier to selection.**

Key Dates

- **Interested Applicants Webinar:** CHSA will hold a webinar for interested applicants to learn more and ask questions about any element of this RFP on **Wednesday, November 4, 2026 at 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM Eastern**. [Click here to register.](#)
- **Application deadline:** All applications must be received through the [online application form](#) by 11:59 PM Pacific on **Friday, December 4, 2026** in order to be considered.
- **Finalist announcement:** Applicants will be notified if they are proceeding to a finalist interview on **Monday, December 21, 2026**.
- **Finalist interviews:** Applicants who are identified as finalist candidates will be asked to meet with the selection team for an interview **the week of January 4, 2027**.
- **Selection announcements:** CHSA will inform selected states on **Tuesday, January 19, 2027**. A public announcement will follow.

Definitions

Dual Enrollment in this context applies to any opportunity for K-12 students to enroll in college courses that lead to transcribed credits and involve partnerships between school districts and institutions of higher education in some form. These programs go by many names, but are typically referred to as ***dual enrollment, dual credit, concurrent enrollment, or early college high school***. Included in our understanding of this term are also programs with a career and technical education focus, such as ***P-TECH***.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Dual Enrollment is dual enrollment in which a high school student earns postsecondary credit for career and technical education coursework that is part of a defined program of study aligned to a credential of value. The course carries credit at both the high school and the postsecondary institution, counts toward a certificate, associate degree, or other postsecondary

credential in a technical field (or toward an industry-recognized credential embedded in one), and is taught to the same standards, learning outcomes, and technical competencies as the equivalent postsecondary CTE course offered to non-high school students.

For purposes of this RFP, CTE dual enrollment does not include articulated credit, meaning arrangements in which a student completes a high school course and becomes eligible to receive college credit only upon later enrolling at a partner postsecondary institution and satisfying additional conditions. Because articulated credit is not transcribed by the postsecondary institution at the time the course is completed and is not earned through enrollment in a postsecondary course, it is treated as distinct from CTE dual enrollment for all purposes under this solicitation. States that utilize articulated credit are welcome to apply for this opportunity, but the focus of this project will be on expanding high-quality CTE dual enrollment.

High-quality CTE dual enrollment is a deliberately designed, state-supported experience that in its ideal state is defined by the following elements:

- **Intentional sequencing within a career pathway.** Students earn postsecondary credit that is sequenced within a pathway, so that CTE dual enrollment advances a student along a pathway rather than checking an advanced coursework box in high school.
- **Credit that transfers and applies.** The credit earned transfers and applies toward fulfilling requirements for a degree or credential with labor market value, positioning students to complete that credential and find well-paying jobs in the state's priority Career Clusters and in-demand occupations.
- **Rigorous, career-connected instruction.** Courses combine rigorous academic content with industry-aligned learning, building both the technical and durable skills students need to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce.
- **Formal K–12/postsecondary partnership.** Programs are delivered through structured and well designed partnerships between school districts and postsecondary institutions.
- **Advising and student supports.** Students receive advising that connects their CTE dual enrollment coursework to their postsecondary and career goals and supports them through the transition to the credential-granting institution.
- **Strategic, targeted access.** Participation grows deliberately, concentrated in programs of study aligned to the state's priority Career Clusters and/or occupations, and reaches the students with the most to gain, such as first-generation college-goers, students from low-income families, and rural students, who have had the fewest opportunities to earn college credit in those fields.
- **A shared state vision, backed by data and funding.** The program is governed by a coherent state vision, with disaggregated data and sustainable funding structures needed to verify it is working and for whom.

What is the College in High School Alliance?

The College in High School Alliance (CHSA) is a collaborative partnership between Achieving the Dream, Advance CTE, Bard College, Foresight Law + Policy, JFF, the Middle College National Consortium, and the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships.

Working together under the banner of CHSA, these organizations have dedicated staff, capacity, and resources towards their shared mission of working with policymakers, programs, and other stakeholders

to advance dual enrollment policy focused on a statewide vision, strategic access, and intentional experiences.

Since its launch nearly ten years ago, CHSA has provided significant direct technical assistance support to states. Through two technical assistance cohorts – the first from 2021–2023 [partnering with six states](#) and the 2024–2026 [Next Phase of Dual Enrollment Policy cohort](#) partnering with seven states – and directly partnering with states, CHSA has worked to advance dual enrollment policy in 19 states. This includes supporting states in a number of significant achievements, including setting statewide vision and goals, securing new dual enrollment funding, creating new statewide dual enrollment policies, securing resources and new policy to ease instructor credentialing challenges, and helping state policymakers support their practitioners.

For the Credit to Careers Initiative, the CHSA team also includes Education Analytics, who will be supporting states in assessing and improving their CTE and dual enrollment data systems.

For Questions, Please Contact

We have developed an [Application Guide](#) with more detailed information about this project and the opportunities. For additional questions about any of these opportunities or submission requirements, please contact:

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