

Guidance for Updating the CLNA for 2023 and 2024

THECB advises colleges to regard the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) as a living document to be reassessed on a regular basis. Colleges may update their CLNAs locally as needed to aid planning or document successes, and a college may submit its updates to THECB annually. Colleges must, at the least, follow the Perkins V requirement to update the CLNA for the second year following submission of the first CLNA, using the statutory process followed during preparation of the first CLNA. Revised CLNAs will be submitted to THECB in summer 2022 for the FY 2023 and FY 2024 program years. As your college develops its revised CLNA, THECB Perkins staff offer the following guidance.

The best practices offered in this document are excerpted from a recent report (“Report,” “*Lessons*”) prepared jointly by Advance CTE and the national Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE). The Report is a state policy guidance document based on lessons learned from the first national round of CLNA submissions. In preparing the report, Advance CTE and ACTE interviewed and collected data from 35 federal, state, and local CTE leaders. (*Lessons in Collaboration and Innovation: The Impact and Promise of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment*, [CLNA Impact and Promise Advance CTE Jan 2022.pdf \(careertech.org\)](#)). THECB staff have adapted the most relevant guidance for local college district consideration.

Improved Alignment

“The CLNA aims to improve alignment between the needs of learners, employers and the community and decisions about CTE programming and funding. State CTE leaders interviewed for the report reported success in this regard, with greater alignment between needs and budgets and fewer local recipients using Perkins as a ‘wish list.’” (Adapted from *Lessons*, p. 7)

Colleges should embrace the principle of alignment to ensure that Perkins funds are used purposefully in response to identified local needs. The result will be a stronger local Perkins program, improved student outcomes, and better performance on the Core Indicators.

Equitable Access to Programs and Equitable Opportunity for Success

As with the first CLNA, colleges must address the following topic areas in their CLNA updates.

1. Student performance toward improved core indicator performance;
2. Size, scope and quality of programs offered;
3. Programmatic alignment to labor market needs;
4. Progress toward implementing high-quality, high-wage, or in-demand programs and programs of study;
5. Recruitment, retention and training of faculty and staff; and
6. Progress toward improving access and equity.

Improving equitable access and opportunity for success will continue to be a THECB emphasis with the 2023-2024 CLNA update. Colleges must budget funds to address newly identified and ongoing equity gaps. Revised CLNA goals must be tied to programmatic plans and budget items in the FY 2022-2023 application. Perkins V sets forth the following requirements for the student equity section of the CLNA (Sec 134(2)(E)):

(E) A description of progress toward implementation of equal access to high-quality career and technical education courses and programs of study for all students, including—

- (i) strategies to overcome barriers that result in lower rates of access to, or performance gaps in, the courses and programs for special populations;
- (ii) providing programs that are designed to enable special populations to meet the local levels of performance; and
- (iii) providing activities to prepare special populations for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations in competitive, integrated settings that will lead to self-sufficiency.

THECB offers the following guidance for addressing student equity, adapted from state leaders' best practices recommendations:

Fully Commit to Putting Equity at the Center of the CLNA

One of the most powerful benefits of the CLNA is the ability to identify access and performance gaps across learner populations, enabling CTE programs to better serve special populations and historically marginalized learners and break down inequities.

- Facilitate local root cause analysis. Applying the data analysis inherent in the CLNA to student equity is a critical first step in investigating and closing equity gaps. Local performance data, disaggregated by demographic diversity and self-identified special populations students, provides a basis for root cause analysis to explore why gaps exist and how they can be closed.
- Facilitate equity conversations in stakeholder engagement meetings and other college gatherings. Stakeholder meetings should seek feedback from all required stakeholder groups on how well a college is supporting students with barriers to success. Beyond stakeholder meetings, a college can foster a culture of equity by incorporating an equity focus into campus presentations, meetings, and local conferences. (Adapted from *Lessons*, p. 13)

Stakeholder Engagement

The current CLNA update offers the opportunity for colleges to engage with stakeholders more robustly than many were able to in the early days of the pandemic. Perkins V requires consultation with the following stakeholders:

1. Secondary CTE providers, which may include a regional education service center; high school principals; and CTE administrators, teachers, counselors, and other secondary CTE specialists;
2. Local workforce board representatives and a range of local or regional businesses or industries;
3. Students;

4. Special populations;
5. Local or regional agencies serving out-of-school, homeless, and other at-risk postsecondary students or potential students; and
6. Representatives of Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations, where applicable.

(Adapted from Perkins V Sec. 134(d).)

THECB offers the following guidance for vigorous stakeholder engagement, adapted from the Report:

Emphasize Local Stakeholder Engagement

One area for improvement identified by state and local leaders for the Report is the depth and breadth of stakeholders engaged. District-wide stakeholder engagement on a scale required for the CLNA was new to many colleges, and the pandemic complicated in-depth engagement.

- Receive and analyze more input from stakeholder engagements to the CLNA . To improve the depth and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups, colleges should structure stakeholder meetings to gather more details than was possible in the first round of meeting. Review of stakeholder feedback within groups, as well as across groups to detect general trends, will help colleges to develop better aligned goals to address identified gaps across CLNA categories. Colleges are encouraged to view stakeholder engagement for the FY 2022-2023 CLNA update as an opportunity to develop a framework for ongoing engagement.
- Use a variety of consultation methods. Advisory board meetings and surveys are important tools to gather information for the CLNA. However, there are other ways to solicit more nuanced feedback from stakeholder groups, including qualitative research methods such as focus groups, discussion sessions, and interviews. Focus groups and similar discussions will particularly powerful when facilitators come prepared with gaps identified in the data and engage stakeholders to understand more about root causes and potential solutions. (adapted from *Lessons*, p. 15)

View Your CLNA as an Opportunity

The time and effort required for colleges to complete a quality CLNA process are significant. THECB encourages colleges to view the CLNA as an opportunity, rather than a compliance exercise.

- Ensure that framing language, trainings and engagement exercises are focused on the positive aspects of the CLNA. As with any complex exercise, there is a risk of a “check-the-box” mentality if stakeholders, CTE faculty, and other staff are overwhelmed or do not fully understand the value of a robust CLNA. There is also the risk that a college will not use the results of the CLNA as thoughtfully as possible if administrators do not understand the value of the process. A college’s CTE leaders should ensure that the value of the CLNA is front and center in any trainings and

documents and that conversation opportunities help CTE faculty, staff and leaders apply the results in positive ways.

- Share results with non-CTE administrators, staff, and faculty and other important stakeholders. A college's CTE leaders can capitalize on the opportunity of the CLNA by ensuring that results are shared with decision-making staff at the college, employers, and local workforce boards so that action can be taken on systemic issues. For example, CTE leaders could help programs meet needs that surface during the CLNA through additional funding or policy changes to address program implementation barriers.
- Market the opportunity to stakeholders. To help ensure that stakeholders are willing to dedicate the time to engage authentically in the CLNA process, colleges can distribute key messages that emphasize the importance of the CLNA and the purpose it serves. Messages to stakeholders should emphasize the opportunities and service improvements that could result for students, employers, and the community based on the outcomes of the CLNA. (Adapted from *Lessons*, p.18)

The guidance above is intended to augment resources posted to the THECB and TACTE websites toward supporting colleges in developing robust, highly informative CLNAs. Colleges are invited to reach out to their Perkins advisors with questions during the FY 2022-2023 CLNA process ([2021-2022 Perkins Staff Assignments \(texas.gov\)](https://www.texas.gov)). THECB Perkins staff wish colleges a productive and positive spring.