

Introduction

Welcome to the Talent Pipeline Management® (TPM) Resource Guide for high-quality career and technical education (CTE). The intended audience of this resource is CTE system leaders and practitioners as well as their employer partners; though other stakeholders interested in TPM may also benefit from the resources contained herein.

The purpose of this guide is to build stronger partnerships between employers and the CTE community—bridging the communication divide by providing each with an orientation of the other. Another goal is to demonstrate how TPM can be used as a framework to improve employer-led partnerships with CTE system leaders and practitioners. It is our hope that this resource guide serves not only as an introduction to the TPM framework, but that more CTE systems and programs can begin leveraging and benefiting from this authentically employer-led movement.

What is TPM

Led by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, TPM is designed to be a scalable, authentically employer-led solution designed to close the skills gap in ways that generate a return on investment (ROI) for learners, education and workforce providers, employers, and the communities in which they reside. It is a systemic approach to unlocking employer leadership and engagement in a novel way by speaking the language of—and leveraging strategies and practices associated with—**supply chain management**. The TPM system is taught through the **TPM Academy**® and supported by the TPM Academy curriculum and web tools. It provides a structured process that facilitates employers engaging in collective action, producing primary source data about their workforce needs and challenges, and designing and implementing solutions that address their most pressing workforce **shared pain points**. TPM is built to generate **shared value** for all stakeholders. Launched in 2014, the growing TPM movement is now in 33 states, DC, and Canada, with hundreds of active **employer collaboratives** involving thousands of employers.

What is CTE

CTE refers to programs of study offered mainly by secondary schools, regional technical centers, and community and technical colleges. These programs of study provide students with the academic, employability, and technical skills and credentials needed to prepare for further education and careers.

Why a TPM Resource Guide for CTE

We are in an economy that competes on talent. Employers in a variety of industries are facing chronic skill shortages and are eagerly exploring new strategies to work with education partners to address their talent attraction, sourcing, retention, as well as diversity and equity needs.

Learners also must be effective in their pursuit of career awareness and exploration activities and in connecting their education, training, and credentialing to employment. Workers too must find, access, and complete **upskilling** opportunities to achieve upward economic mobility.

Moreover, state leadership, as well as high schools and colleges, are exploring new strategies for engaging employers in ways that improve their responsiveness to employer needs. Complementary to this objective is enhancing **career pathways** and programs of study, particularly if simultaneously addressing opportunity gaps for populations with barriers to education, employment, and career advancement.

Strengthening relationships between employers and CTE is more important now than ever before. However, while the need for stronger employer and CTE partnerships is self-evident and growing, there remains major systemic challenges when it comes to engaging employers and sustaining these partnerships at the scale needed for an economy that competes on talent.

TPM is a field-tested and proven solution that was built by the business community based on their own best practices for partner engagement; these resources include examples of how TPM has been implemented in communities large and small. To date, business associations and employers that have been trained on the TPM approach have applied their learnings to a wide variety of partnerships, including CTE. However, not until this point have we developed a set of resources and support materials that are specific to the CTE community.

TPM is a system and process that complements CTE and can be leveraged in ways that enhance the employer role in these systems by moving employers from an advisory capacity to an **end-customer** role. TPM can be used to strengthen CTE programs in two major ways:

- **The TPM Framework.** TPM provides a framework and shared language for improving understanding and communication between employers and their education and workforce partners.
- **TPM Strategies.** TPM provides a set of strategies, tools, and resources that can be used to improve how employers and education programs work together to develop and implement CTE to get better results for both learners and employers, as well as education and workforce providers.

This guide is meant to bridge the language gap between the CTE and employer communities. It is also a resource for understanding how CTE practitioners can leverage TPM to improve their programs in ways that better connect learners to employment. Whether you are a CTE practitioner or system leader, an employer looking into TPM and how to better partner with CTE programs in their community, or an existing member of the **TPM National Learning Network**—this resource is for you.

What is Included in the Resource Guide

This guide provides a set of resources that can be used to explore how TPM can be leveraged as a framework as well as a set of strategies, to build stronger employer and CTE partnerships. Building successful partnerships requires employers and the CTE community to develop a mutual understanding of each other's worlds and the roles that different professionals and organizations play in making partnerships work. The guide is designed to both introduce newcomers to TPM as well as enhance the existing TPM movement. In addition to this introduction, the guide is composed of three core resources, identified and described below:

- **Resource 1: CTE Orientation to the Employer Community**—This resource is intended for the CTE community as an orientation to better understand the employer community and the professional roles therein.
- **Resource 2: Employer Orientation to the CTE Community**—This resource is intended for the employer community as an orientation to better understand the CTE community, the professional roles therein, and the policy landscape that undergirds CTE in the United States.
- **Resource 3: Improving Employer Engagement in CTE through TPM**—This resource describes how to use TPM to improve employer engagement in CTE. It (1) provides an orientation to TPM as a framework for organizing employers and talent supply chain partnerships that create shared value for learners, education and workforce providers, and employers; (2) explains how TPM can be used to improve communication and promote shared understanding between employers and the CTE community; and (3) describes how TPM can be leveraged as a transformative approach for engaging employers in CTE program design, delivery, and improvement, especially in ways that expand equity and diversity.

Each resource guide includes recommended actions with questions to consider.

How to Use the Resource Guide

This guide is intended to be flexible in design to support a variety of uses. The resources can be used as standalone documents or bundled together depending on your needs, or the needs of your audience. The following are examples of how you can use the documents together or separately.

- **Getting the Word Out:** The resources can be distributed via email, embedded in a newsletter, or used as collateral at related events in order to help socialize TPM with potential employer partners or with state and local CTE leaders and practitioners.
- **Meetings/Presentations:** The resources can be used as pre-reading or as a resource to have on hand during one-on-one or group meetings, such as with chambers of commerce or with CTE advisory boards. They can also be highlighted in or used to inform a presentation on TPM, CTE, or employer engagement best practices.
- **Workshops/Orientations:** The resources can be used to structure a workshop with employers and CTE leaders and practitioners to explore best practices for employer engagement, or the TPM framework specifically. It can also be used or featured during an in-person or virtual TPM orientation.
- **TPM Academies:** Should you choose to participate in or design your own TPM Academy, these resources can be embedded in the instruction as well as the delivery of the TPM Academy curriculum. They can also be used to help recruit participants in a TPM Academy.
- **CTE Planning:** The resources can be used by state and local CTE leaders to inform their strategy for organizing sector-based or regional employer partnerships and can be included as part of the design of their **Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA)**.

Further Exploring TPM and CTE

As stated earlier, whether you are a CTE practitioner or system leader, an employer looking into TPM and how to better partner with CTE programs in their community, or an existing member of the TPM National Learning Network—this Resource Guide has something for you. Not all partners will start from scratch; TPM can be used to add value to existing collaborations between the employer and CTE communities to build stronger partnerships with an outcomes-focused approach. If this is your first exposure to TPM, we encourage you to follow up with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation team, our TPM Fellows, or any current or past **TPM practitioner** to learn more.

In addition to this resource, there is a growing body of work around TPM that is available and waiting for you. We encourage you to explore the TPM Academy curriculum to unpack and learn the many strategies that make up the TPM system and approach. We also encourage those of you that are interested to begin exploring how you can start or join a TPM Academy.

Advance CTE has a series of fact sheets that clarify the career and technical education (CTE) landscape, particularly the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, the federal education program that invests in secondary and postsecondary CTE programs. Here are some selected resources:

Understanding the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V): A primer on the purpose of Perkins, who benefits, who receives the funding, as well as how the funds are invested.

How States Use Perkins—The Basics: This overview includes key findings from state CTE directors on the implementation of Perkins, and how Perkins Basic State Grants are used.

Getting to Know the State CTE Director Role: An introduction to state CTE directors, who oversee the implementation of Perkins within their respective states, as well as all features of CTE.

Career Technical Education Glossary: A resource that includes specific CTE terms (in addition to the provided Terms and TPM Concepts glossary).