

## **A Quick Guide to Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs)**

### **What are Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs)?**

**Career and Technical Student Organizations, commonly referred to as CTSOs**, are youth organizations designed to support students in **career and technical education (CTE) programs**. Career and technical education, formerly known as vocational education, helps prepare high school graduates for the next step, whether it is postsecondary education or entry into the workforce. Rigorous academic content tied to technical subject matter, as well as internships and other cooperative work experiences, are hallmarks of CTE programs. Through these co-curricular programs of study, students get a head start on their career preparation, whether their goal is to become a teacher, doctor, automotive technician, or computer programmer. CTSOs are considered an integral part of CTE; they help students develop the technical and leadership skills that will enable them to succeed in their career paths. Members of the 11 organizations that have been designated as CTSOs (see list below) that operate as part of a co-curricular CTE program are eligible for federal funding under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 2006.

### **What do CTSOs do?**

CTSOs provide unique programs of career and leadership development, motivation, and recognition for secondary and post-secondary students enrolled in CTE programs. **Educators have found that CTSOs are most effective when they are integrated into the CTE curriculum by a trained professional.** Through CTSOs, professional educators can provide curriculum-based activities and experiences that help students gain career, leadership, and personal skills to help them grow into outstanding employees and citizens.

For example, by embedding activities and resources available through the Future Educators Association® in the curriculum for your teacher preparation CTE program, you can begin to offer your students more valuable learning experiences that will better prepare them for a career in education.

### **Which organizations are CTSOs?**

**Eleven CTSOs have been designated by the U.S. Department of Education:**

- Business Professionals of America (BPA)
- DECA
- Future Business Leaders of America–Phi Beta Lambda (FBLA–PBL)
- **Future Educators Association® (FEA)**
- Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)
- Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA)
- National FFA Organization
- National Postsecondary Agricultural Student Organization (PAS)
- National Young Farmer Educational Association (NYFEA)
- SkillsUSA
- Technology Student Association (TSA)

### **What is the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 2006?**

The 2006 Perkins Act provides federal support for career and technical education. More specifically, this legislation provides resources to secondary and postsecondary CTE programs to support innovation and program improvement. States receive basic state grant funding that can then be distributed to eligible recipients such as high schools, career centers, and community and technical colleges. The 2006 Perkins Act focuses on the academic achievement of CTE students, strengthens the connections between secondary and postsecondary education, and improves state and local accountability. Moreover, it specifically allows state and local funds to be used for CTSO activities. For more information, visit [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov).