

OKLAHOMA CENTERS OF WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE

Guidelines for Certification

Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education
1500 West Seventh Avenue | Stillwater OK 74074-4365

Oklahoma**WORKS**Together

2020 Application Process





LOCAL CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

Local System Resources Alignment
Central Coordination of State System

Committee
Recommendation



PURPOSE AND MISSION

Efforts to strengthen the workforce are a major priority for the state and the nation. We must leverage our existing state resources and develop a plan of action aligned with the needs of business and industry and consistent with Oklahoma's rich history and culture. The centers will integrate resources within the educational system and beyond into a branded program that businesses, both national and international, will trust to support their plans for expansion and that current Oklahoma companies continue to use.

Local ownership is essential to the success and sustainment of an effective workforce system. Oklahoma communities are already taking great strides toward meeting the evolving demands of the workforce. Key strategies for the Centers of Workforce Excellence are the following:

Leverage Oklahoma's educational infrastructure.

Strategically align local and regional workforce demand.

Maximize existing resources and programs to support workforce needs.

Engage Oklahoma business leaders.

Brand the centers.

DESIGNATION OF A CENTER OF WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE

Designation of a local Center of Workforce Excellence serves as official recognition of the hard work and dedication of Oklahoma communities to leverage and align resources to build a comprehensive workforce development system that is responsive to local and state demand. Specifically, recognition offers value:

- » **Business and industry** realize improvement in the available workforce and talent pipeline through the efforts of the Center of Workforce Excellence.
- » **Students** can see the value placed by the community and the state on their career pathways, academic plans and course choices.
- » **Parents and other taxpayers** can see added returns on their investments in local initiatives and activities.
- » **Educators, business owners and community leaders** receive public acknowledgment of their existing partnerships and workforce development efforts.
- » **Individuals and businesses seeking to relocate or strengthen their existing business** can consider the community's dedication to education and training as another factor in their decision.
- » **Recipients are included in State of Oklahoma marketing materials** focused on economic development to assist in promoting the assets of the community.

- » **Recipients are qualified to apply for additional incentive funding** to further support the development and sustainment of the Center of Excellence.

To seek designation as a Center of Workforce Excellence follow the guidelines in this document to prepare and submit the application. The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education reviews each application and uses a rubric to determine its completeness. Successful applications will be submitted to the ad-hoc committee of the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development for final evaluation and approval.

The approach to being designated can be unique for each community. It should document ongoing efforts and plans among community stakeholders aimed at strengthening local education opportunities and workforce development activities.

DOCUMENTING THE CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The designation as a Center of Workforce Excellence should document local and regional needs and plans. The completed application serves as the road map to the workforce priorities in the community or region. As a result, no typical application exists. A completed application must address each of the following five (5) topics:

1. EVIDENCE OF EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

Use existing partnerships and resources to deliver diverse educational opportunities to provide a competitive workforce.

Documentation in this section can include the following:

- » Data about existing educational footprint for region being served.
- » Data about workforce supply and demand—labor market alignment.
- » Data about gaps in educational components for regional workforce.
- » Data about local/regional workforce development needs and plans.
- » Existing pathways in local education and training opportunities for region being served in the identified ecosystem.
- » Examples of career awareness opportunities/events involving parents or guardians, students and employers.
- » Support for credentials and certifications among education providers and employers that align with advisory board requirements.
- » Support for activities and initiatives of CareerTech student organizations, Cooperative Extension organizations, scouting organizations and other organizations.

2. EVIDENCE OF PARTNERSHIPS AND ADVISORY BOARDS

This section identifies existing and planned partnerships within the community (or region) that contribute to the efforts of workforce development. Documentation in this section can include the following:

- » Education-employer partnerships (local or state businesses or industries, public schools, technology centers, higher education entities, workforce development organizations).
- » Cooperative agreements.
- » Work-based learning programs.
- » Industry advisory boards.
- » Ongoing plans for connection with companies and central points of contact.
- » Connections with industry advocacy groups, Workforce related community nonprofits, tribal governments, related state agencies and federal programs.

3. EVIDENCE OF PLANNING AND PROGRESS

This section restates major outcomes involving key partners (listed above), results benchmarks and the status of progress toward each. This section resembles a mini action plan that answers these questions:

- » Outcomes/Goals—What are the major goals of each partnership, initiative or activity?
- » Measures/Benchmarks—How will results be measured for each outcome or goal?
- » Status—For each outcome or goal, is it completed, in progress or planned?

4. EVIDENCE OF PROMOTION AND RECOGNITION

This section lists promotion activities and recognition events relating to the work of the center. Documentation in this section can include the following:

- » Examples of certificates.
- » Examples of local media coverage.
- » Examples of industry recognition events and communication outlets (newsletters, websites, social media, etc.).
- » Examples of promotional materials.
- » Recognition events and ceremonies.

5. EVIDENCE OF SUSTAINABILITY

This section identifies plans or commitments to support and expand the work of the partnerships. Documentation in this section can include the following:

- » Examples of activity or event growth or expansion plans.
- » Examples of facilities growth or improvement plans relating to workforce activities.
- » Examples of long-term targets in community, education and employer planning.
- » Examples of planned budget commitments for partnerships and activities.



APPLICATION CHECKLIST

GENERAL REMINDERS

- ✓ Submit an MS Word document not to exceed ten (10) pages of narrative (excluding a cover sheet and attachments).
- ✓ Use the Calibri or Times New Roman font and a 12-point font size.
- ✓ Single-space the text in each application section and double-space between sections.
- ✓ Number the pages in the completed application.
- ✓ Include the five section headings as listed:
 - » Evidence of Education and Innovation.
 - » Evidence of Partnerships and Advisory Boards.
 - » Evidence of Planning and Progress.
 - » Evidence of Promotion and Recognition.
 - » Evidence of Sustainability.
- ✓ Include the documentation for each section, as described on earlier pages of this guide.
- ✓ Document the organizational structure of the local system (see page 7).
- ✓ Make a copy of the completed application and letters of support for your records.
- ✓ Upload the completed application and minimum of two (2) letters of support to ctYOU.org. Scroll to Course Categories and select Centers of Workforce Excellence.
- ✓ Questions? Email the Resource Center at: resourcecenter@careertech.ok.gov.



APPLICATION COVER SHEET

Add a cover sheet. Provide the following information on the cover sheet:

COMMUNITY/REGION APPLICATION

For: [CITY/REGION NAME]

Date: [MONTH, DAY, YEAR]

Submitted by: [NAME OF PRIMARY CONTACT]

Email: [EMAIL ADDRESS OF PRIMARY CONTACT]

Phone: [PHONE NUMBER OF PRIMARY CONTACT]

Address: [NON-RESIDENTIAL MAILING ADDRESS OF PRIMARY CONTACT]

TIP: The primary contact for an application can be a local employer, an education leader, a civic leader or other responsible individual. The application review committee may need to contact this individual with any questions about the application.

Letters of Support—Attach up to ten letters of support with your completed application. There is a minimum of two (2) letters of support. Each letter should come from a representative of a partnering organization. Writers could include mayor, school district superintendent, school district board president or chairperson, university administrator, employer, chamber of commerce director, technology center superintendent, advisory council president, etc. **Instead of multiple letters, a single letter having multiple signatures is acceptable.**

TIP: Scan each signed letter in PDF format and upload the PDF files with the MS Word application document.

NOTES ON THE APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

A state-level committee of workforce development advocates reviews each application and uses a rubric to determine its completeness.

The rubric helps to ensure that each application receives a thorough and consistent review. Successful applicants will be notified whether certification has been granted. No fee is involved with the application process. During the review process, members of the review committee may decide to contact the community/region primary contact person about any questions.

The listed primary contact person will receive feedback via email about the status of the application submitted.

Communication about a final Center of Workforce Excellence designation is the responsibility of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education with notification also being sent to the governor and the secretary of commerce and workforce development.

For communications about submitted applications, contact Angela Jones at angela.jones@careertech.ok.gov.

LOCAL ECOSYSTEM WORKFORCE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Each ecosystem will work to develop a structure that supports workforce development efforts in their respective areas. The structure will require an organized advisory council, industry and business engagement, identified training facilities, ecosystem analysis, industry profile, an asset map and action plans. The information below is to be used as a guide in creating the system and preparing for the Center of Excellence application process.

ADVISORY COUNCIL	DESIGNATED CONVENER	ENGAGED STAKEHOLDERS	TRAINING FACILITIES	GOALS & OBJECTIVES
Each workforce ecosystem must organize a Workforce Advisory team which collaborates to create strategies that respond to local workforce needs.	The designated convener will be the entity that is responsible for organizing and leading the overall effort. The convener should have a vested stake in the process as well as the resources and capacity to assume the leadership role.	The workforce advisory committee should be comprised of stakeholders at every level. Ideally, the council will be led by business and industry. Other stakeholders include PK-12 education, Career Tech, Higher Education, workforce/employment agencies and community organizations.	Each community must identify the training facilities that will be leveraged to support the workforce development system. The facilities leveraged will likely be those operated by the educational partners engaged with the workforce advisory council.	Each local workforce advisory committee will develop goals and objectives that will move the effort forward in a logical manner. The goals and objectives will be used to measure success of the group's efforts.
ECOSYSTEM ALIGNMENT	INDUSTRY ANALYSIS	EMPLOYMENT DEMAND	PATHWAYS & CREDENTIALING	TRAINING PROGRAMS
Each workforce ecosystem will work to establish an aligned system that targets the most in-demand industry and employment sectors.	An industry analysis will be conducted to provide the workforce council with critical data for system alignment. The analysis will focus on the areas most prevailing industries and their workforces need.	Data should be gathered that identifies areas of employment demand in the local area. This phase should focus on required skill sets, credentialing requirements, and potential pipeline groups.	The workforce council will collaboratively evaluate existing career pathway options and credential attainment opportunities at local educational institutions and fill gaps as necessary.	Educational providers in each local ecosystem will develop training programs that align with the identified employment demands.
TRAINING FACILITIES	PK-12	CAREER TECH DISTRICTS	HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	TRADE RELATED ORGANIZATIONS
Each workforce advisory council will work to identify and leverage existing training facilities to support the system.	It is essential that the PK-12 system is an integral part of the overall system. This level will focus on career awareness, STEM programming, and skill development programs that are aligned with the overall effort.	The Career Tech system encompasses the entire state and will be an essential asset that can be utilized for the system. Existing training facilities can support system training, both onsite and offsite.	Higher education institutions will be valuable in developing higher level skills sets through customized training programs, micro-credentials, and relevant degree programs	Trade related organizations can be a valuable part of the effort. These organizations have long-standing programs that provide relevant training that support trade occupations.
ASSET MAPPING	STATE AGENCIES	FEDERAL PROGRAMS	TRIBAL RESOURCES	COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
Each workforce advisory council will work to develop an asset map that identifies resources that can be leveraged to support the effort.	The state of Oklahoma has many agencies in place which support employment, training and workforce development initiatives. These agencies have a variety of resources in place that can be leveraged to support training for business and individuals.	Many federal programs are in place across the state which focus on employment and workforce related efforts. These can vary from community to community but can be very valuable in providing the support to effectively execute system strategies.	Oklahoma is fortunate to have strong tribal representation across the State. These organizations have a plethora of resources that focus on employment and workforce development.	There are a variety of community related organizations that are positioned well to be a part of the workforce development system at the local level.
ACTION PLANS	GOALS	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
Each workforce advisory council will develop plans that provide a road map for development, execution and sustainment of the workforce system.	Each local area should establish goals that align with the overall effort of the group. These goals should be relevant, achievable and lead to successful implementation of the plan.	Objectives will be developed that help drive the achievement of the stated goals. These objectives will identify the measurable actions that will be implemented to drive success.	Strategies will be a part of the action plan that will provide engaged stakeholders with specifics on accomplishing the stated objectives.	Finally, the workforce advisory group should develop a plan of continuous improvement. This plan will include regular intervals of evaluation and sustainment of the plan.

INITIAL TIMELINE

Initial Comment and Question Period OPENS	Friday, January 24, 2020
Initial Comment and Question Period CLOSES	Friday, March 13, 2020
Application Process Release	Friday, May 1, 2020
Application Period Opens	Friday, May 15, 2020
Application Due Dates	30 days prior to each Governor’s Council Meeting <i>Dates pending will be outlined in final application</i>
Announcements	Made within 4-6 weeks after review

Oklahoma Centers of Workforce Excellence *Application Rubric*

Applicant: _____

Reviewer: _____ Date: _____

	EXCEPTIONAL (10, 9)	ACCEPTABLE (8, 7, 6)	WORK NEEDED (5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0)	SCORE / COMMENTS
Education and Innovation	Application provides data from multiple sources detailing both education and workforce supply and demand. Data reflects a community-wide or regional focus. Identified Ecosystems. Career Awareness, Educational Attainment and supporting organizations.	Application provides limited data from multiple sources detailing both education and workforce supply and demand. Data reflects a community-wide or regional focus. Identified Ecosystems. Career Awareness, Educational Attainment and supporting organizations.	Application lacks data from multiple sources detailing both education and workforce supply and demand. Data reflects a community-wide or regional focus. Identified Ecosystems. Career Awareness, Educational Attainment and supporting organizations.	
Partnerships and Advisory Boards	Application identifies multiple existing and planned partnerships. Purpose of each partnership is stated. Education-employer partnerships evident. Connection with various entities.	Application identifies at least one existing and planned partnerships. Lacks clear purpose of each partnership. Education-employer partnerships evidence limited. Connection with no more than two entities.	Application identifies no existing or planned partnerships. No purpose for partnerships. Only connection with one entity.	
Evidence of Planning and Progress	Application states major outcomes of identified partners. Benchmarks and status of each major outcome are identified.	Application states major outcomes but offers incomplete progress benchmarks for each.	Application includes no major outcomes, benchmarks or progress indicators.	
Evidence of Promotion and Recognition	Application documents multiple promotion activities and recognition events relating to the identified partnerships and work of the center. Activities and events span the calendar year and incorporate multiple media.	Application documents promotion and recognition activities of some partnerships, but not all. Activities and events are concentrated within a narrow period during the calendar year. Use of media is limited.	Application lacks evidence of promotion activities or recognition events.	
Evidence of Planning and Progress	Application documents detailed plans or commitments to support or expand the work of identified partnerships in terms of personnel, time, funding and other resources. Documentation includes long-term targets and related expenditure commitments.	Application documents short-term commitments to identified partnerships, commitments to some but not all partnerships, or commitments of some but not all resources.	Application lacks evidence of long-term commitments to identified partnerships.	
TOTAL SCORE				____ out of 50

