

# CAST | Until learning has no limits™

## Leveraging Universal Design for Learning to Support Special Populations in CTE Programs

*The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* is the update to the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006*, the nation's career and technical education (CTE) law. Signed into law in July 2018, the new CTE law requires states to reduce disparities and performance gaps for CTE students especially for those historically underserved, referred to in the law as Special Populations<sup>i</sup>. With over \$1 billion distributed to states via formula grants, the law helps educators in high schools as well as two and four-year colleges, employers, workforce development boards and community organizations provide CTE to high school youth as well as college age and career-seeking adults.

The updated CTE law provides states and their local programs a new opportunity to reimagine and refine how CTE is provided to youth and career-seeking adults. **By including Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as an allowable use of state and local funds, while also promoting UDL as a recommended component of the training for CTE instructors working with English Learners (ELs) and individuals with disabilities, Congress is urging states to invest in one of the most effective evidence-based practices. Pioneered at CAST, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), is a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn.** For three decades, CAST has been working to ensure that learning has no limits whether it is happening on the job, at a community college or in the K-12 classroom. We research and apply best practices to ensure all people can and do reach their full potential.

The following is a guide to engaging CAST in developing your state and local Perkins plans. The products and services described in the guide are examples of the ways in which CAST can support your efforts in serving all learners – especially special populations. For further discussions, contact Sam Catherine Johnston, Director of Postsecondary and Workforce Development at [sjohnston@cast.org](mailto:sjohnston@cast.org)

<sup>i</sup> As defined in Perkins 5, special populations include the following: English Language Learners; Low Income Youth/Adults; Youth who are in/have aged out of foster care; Individuals experiencing homelessness; Individuals with disabilities; Single parents and single pregnant women; Youth with a parent who is an active duty member of the armed forces; Out-of-workforce individuals; and Individuals preparing for non-traditional fields.

## Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century: Partnering with CAST in Developing your District and State Plans

PERKINS 5	CAST PRODUCTS AND SERVICES
<p>School districts need access to high-quality professional development for CTE educators in evidence-based practices for accommodations to special populations. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is named as an authorized practice.</p>	<p><b>CAST</b> combines onsite and online coaching to support educators in creating inclusive, UDL-based experiences. Topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Building collaborative cultures through instructional rounds</li> <li>➤ Applying UDL to instruction</li> <li>➤ Accommodations for special populations</li> <li>➤ Improving teacher practice through video clubs</li> <li>➤ Creating innovative curricula in Learning Design Studios</li> </ul>
<p>Requires [states and districts] to provide career-exploration opportunities for CTE students and cultivate diverse talent pipelines for the current and future workforce.</p>	<p>In partnership with industry and CTE schools, <b>CAST</b> leverages its research-based practices and applied learning to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Co-design inclusive career exploration opportunities for CTE students.</li> <li>➤ Provide career-guidance curricula and technical assistance to prepare special populations for a range of education and career pathways</li> <li>➤ Adapt tools with a CTE focus to enable learners in demonstrate their abilities to prospective employers</li> </ul>
<p>Emphasizes the importance of creating and delivering instructional content in accessible formats using accessible tools and technologies. This includes commercially acquired materials and technologies, the use of Open Educational Resources (OERs), and open source software.</p>	<p><b>CAST</b> leads the National Center on Accessible Educational Materials—a leader in accessibility training and technical assistance that supports improved learning opportunities and outcomes for learners with disabilities.</p> <p>The Center guides SEAs, LEAs, postsecondary institutions, families, publishers, and workforce development agencies in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Creating, selecting, and/or procuring accessible materials and curricula including OERs</li> <li>➤ Understanding how to search for accessible materials and tools</li> <li>➤ Creating learning materials and technologies, including OERs, that benefit special populations</li> </ul>