

BEST PRACTICE: IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION AND USE DATA TO DRIVE EQUITY AND QUALITY

Collecting data on work-based learning (WBL) experiences is key to spotting trends, highlighting promising practices, and identifying and addressing gaps. The vast majority of states collect and disaggregate data on CTE programming to meet the data reporting expectations outlined in Perkins V. These data often include WBL opportunities, especially in states where WBL courses have unique course codes that enable states to collect participation data and disaggregate it by student demographics. However, many states offer WBL opportunities outside of CTE programming that are not measured in this CTE data reporting, meaning that CTE-based WBL data tell just a portion of the story.

Just 20 states collect comprehensive data on WBL participation, including student outcomes. Virginia, for example, offers 11 types of WBL experiences and collects data on all types, including demographics and special populations, three times a year through its [Master Schedule Collection](#) and [Student Record Collections](#) processes. Tennessee has created the [WBL Student Placement Portal](#), in which all WBL programs are required to share information about WBL student participation and outcomes.

States need to be able to disaggregate data to ensure high-quality WBL opportunities are accessed at similar rates across different student groups, with no equity gaps. Most states can disaggregate CTE program data, which frequently includes WBL program data. Fewer have comprehensive data systems that allow them to both capture and disaggregate data for all WBL programming, in and out of CTE courses. To identify trends in WBL participation, just 11 states can disaggregate that comprehensive data by gender, ethnicity, income, geography, and type of experience (e.g., industry sector, internship vs. apprenticeship, etc.) at a minimum.

For example, Virginia's [Master Schedule Collection](#) referenced above captures WBL participation by gender, ethnicity, English learners, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged, military connected, unaccompanied homeless, youth in foster care, single parents, nontraditional students, and out of workforce. School districts can access subgroup-level student data for each WBL experience. As part of its annual [CTE report](#), Iowa disaggregates WBL participation data over time by school size and service area, student grade level and gender, and whether the student qualifies as a minority or is eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch. The report also makes comparisons across the same categories for WBL participation and general CTE participation.

Maryland collects WBL data through its [accountability system](#) and disaggregates those data by student demographics. In addition, Maryland collects some student-level data through a WBL survey system and disaggregates the data by gender, race, and experience type, among other factors. The Maryland Department of Education is in the process of developing a dashboard to make its survey data publicly available.



The use of disaggregated data to identify gaps and barriers at the state and/or local level is a critical component of a continuous improvement feedback loop. A handful of states use WBL data to inform state planning efforts related to CTE programs as part of their Perkins plans, while just two states have developed comprehensive, statewide program improvement processes using WBL data. South Carolina, for example, produces an [annual WBL report](#) that uses data to identify gaps in and barriers to WBL programming statewide. The state uses these data to inform policy and program changes to strengthen the state's approach to work-based learning.

Washington's [Career Connect Washington](#) captures disaggregated data for all of its Career Launch programs and uses those data to identify gaps in programming, inform its overarching strategy, and provide additional support, resources, and assistance to individual programs as needed. Without strong data collection, reporting, and analysis processes, it is impossible for states to identify trends in work-based learning participation and outcomes or to understand how current policies and practices may create opportunities or challenges for certain communities, districts, student groups, or employers affecting participation and outcomes.

