

CTE 101: Career and Technical Education in Florida

History and Definition of CTE

Career and Technical Education (CTE) was formally codified into the United States education system in 1917, and expanded to include “[persons of all ages in all communities](#)” in 1963 with the [Vocational Education Act](#). In 2018, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Education Act of 2006 was reauthorized by President Donald Trump as the Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act ([SCATE Act](#)), allotting \$1.3 billion annually for CTE. CTE is a very broad [term](#) that offers students “organized educational activities providing both academic content and technical skills in current or emerging professions and builds pathways connecting education and the workforce.”

CTE in Florida

In Florida, CTE has undergone several recent revisions to strengthen opportunities for Florida residents. The [CAPE Act](#), originally passed in 2007, provides education and training within the K-12 school system and covers fees associated with certifications in high-demand jobs or emerging industries. In 2021, the Reimagining Education and Career Help ([REACH](#)) Act enhanced coordination between education, training providers and

workforce development partners across the state, establishing a “no wrong door” entry strategy to Florida’s workforce system. The REACH Act also created the [Master Credentials List](#), which provides a comprehensive, state-approved list of degree- and non-degree credentials related to high wage, in-demand occupations. In support of this legislation, there are a number of organizations that expand awareness of CTE opportunities in the state. For example, [GetThereFL](#), Florida’s Workforce Education Initiative, helps students choose a CTE pathway based on their passions and connect the pathway to one of the state’s Florida College System (FCS) institutions or technical colleges. [Apprentice Florida](#) assists employers in establishing apprenticeship programs and connects students to available apprenticeships.

[CTE is more popular than ever before in Florida.](#)

Between 2017 and 2021, enrollment in CTE courses increased by 9.6%, with 799,150 secondary students enrolled in a CTE course during the 2021-2022 academic year. Among 2020-2021 CTE concentrators (those students taking at least three courses in the same career-focused curriculum), 98% graduated high school, and 65% graduated with at least one industry certification.

CTE Credentials in Florida

There are [seven types of CTE credentials](#) available to students in Florida:

Credential Type	Brief Description	Issuer/Timeframe*	Potential Aid Sources	Link to CTE Course/Degree
Digital Tool Certificate	Independent, third-party assessment of digital skills.	Third-party (K-8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAPE Act 	Students must take one or more courses and pass an exam to earn this credential
Industry Certification	Time-limited credential issued by independent third-party and linked to an occupation in demand.	Third-party (K-12/Postsec. Inst.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAPE Act • Bright Futures 	Students must take one or more courses and pass an exam to earn this credential.
Pre/Apprenticeship	Successful completion of technical and academic standards of an apprenticeship program.	Postsecondary Inst. 1-4 years Up to 10,000 clock hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways to Opportunities Grants 	Students must receive related technical instruction and on-the-job training to earn this credential.
Applied Technology Diploma	Provide career and technical instruction leading to employment in an occupation.	Postsecondary Inst. .5-2 years 11-59 college credits 1,000-1,200 clock hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Door Grant Program 	Students must take one or more courses for technical/college credit to earn this credential; generally earned while pursuing A.S. degree.
Career Certificate	Clock hour postsecondary career education program that allows students to go directly into employment in field that requires postsecondary training.	Postsecondary Inst. 1.5 years 40-2,840 clock hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florida Student Assistance Grant Program • Open Door Grant Program • Bright Futures 	Students must take one or more courses to earn this credential and may be eligible to take an industry certification exam(s).
College Credit Certificate	Short-term programs that provide highly specialized core knowledge and skills.	Postsecondary Inst. .5-1.5 years 11-50 college credits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Door Grant Program 	Students must take one or more courses to earn this credential; credential may be earned while pursuing A.S. degree.
A.S. / B.S. Degree	Associate in Science (A.S.) Bachelor of Science (B.S) Multi-year program designed to prepare students for immediate specialized employment.	Postsecondary Inst. 2-4 years 60-134 college credits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAFSA • Bright Futures 	Students must take a series of specialized courses linked to a specific career to earn this credential.

* Timeframes provided are for full-time study.

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