



Region: North Central

Contact Information:

Tami McBride, Regional Network Co-Director - tamim@ncesd.org
Aaron Parrott, Regional Network Co-Director - aaronp@skillsource.org
Linda Dezelle, Career Connected Learning Coordinator -
lindad@ncesd.org

Regional Overview

Learners, Communities, and Partners

The North Central Career Connect Washington (CCW) region, overseen by the North Central Educational Services District and SkillSource Regional Workforce Board, encompasses a diverse group of learners, communities, and partners. This region comprises 4% of the K-12 population in Washington State and is dedicated to providing equitable and inclusive career connected learning (CCL) opportunities to students from various backgrounds, including Native Americans, English Language Learners (ELL), rural students, and individuals with disabilities.

Key partners in this effort include:

- **K-12 School Districts:** Providing foundational education and career technical education (CTE) programs.
- **Post-Secondary Institutions:** Community and technical colleges and regional public baccalaureates that offer advanced training and degree programs.
- **Employers and Industry Partners:** Businesses and organizations that provide work-based learning opportunities and apprenticeships.

Career Connected Learning Opportunities and Pathways

The North Central region currently offers various career connected learning pathways, including Career Launch programs, registered apprenticeships, and non-registered apprenticeships. In the 2022-2023 academic year, the region reported 82 Career Launch enrollments and 442 registered apprenticeship enrollments, totaling 524 enrollments. As of 2023, there were 825 active registered apprentices in various programs across the region.

Existing Career Launch programs focus on several key areas:

- **Veterinary Technician and Manufacturing Apprenticeships:** Programs in partnership with Cascade Veterinary Clinics and AJAC Genie/Terex.

- **Data Center Career Launch Programs:** In collaboration with Wenatchee School District, Microsoft, and Sabey Data Centers.
- **STEM Internships:** Developed with Seattle Children's, Wenatchee Valley College, and local school districts.

Growth Needed to Meet Statewide Near-Term Goals

To align with statewide goals for Career Launch enrollments, the North Central region aims to significantly increase its enrollment numbers by 2025, 2026, and 2027. The region's specific targets are:

- **2025:** 772 enrollments
- **2026:** 864 enrollments
- **2027:** 984 enrollments

These targets are based on the region's proportion of the statewide K-12 population and are essential to reaching the long-term goal of having 60% of the class of 2030 enrolled in and completing a Career Launch program before age 30.

Priority Industry Sectors for Expanded Career Connected Learning

The North Central region is prioritizing several industry sectors for expanded career connected learning opportunities. These sectors were selected based on regional labor market demand, emerging employment trends, and the potential for sustainable career pathways. The key sectors include:

- **Computer and Information Technology:** Emphasizing data centers, AI integration, and support services.
- **Healthcare:** Focused on healthcare support, behavioral health, and community health.
- **Construction and Trades:** Including construction trades and infrastructure development.
- **Manufacturing and Aerospace:** Expanding manufacturing apprenticeships and aerospace career pathways.
- **Renewable Energy and Clean Technology:** Promoting careers in EV battery technology and clean energy.

These sectors are prioritized due to their growing share of regional employment, alignment with state and local economic development strategies, and their capacity to provide family-sustaining jobs. The region's strategy involves collaboration with local employers, educational institutions, and community organizations to develop and enhance these pathways, ensuring they are accessible and equitable for all students.

By focusing on these initiatives, the North Central CCW region aims to build a robust and inclusive ecosystem for career connected learning, ultimately leading to better educational and career outcomes for its diverse student population.

Regional Expansion Priorities

Over the next year and biennium, the North Central Career Connected Learning (CCL) regional network and its partners will focus on supporting and developing specific opportunities to enhance Career Explore and Prep pathways. This strategy aims to broaden the Career Connected Learning ecosystem, ensuring students are better prepared for existing and expanded Career Launch opportunities.

Next Year Focus:

1. **Expansion of Existing Programs:**
 - **Veterinary Technician and Manufacturing Registered Apprenticeships (RAs):** Programs at Cascade Veterinary Clinics and AJAC Genie/Terex will be expanded to serve more students.
 - **Data Center Career Launch Programs:** Expansion of Wenatchee School District programs in partnership with Microsoft and Sabey Data Centers.
 - **WWU Sustainability Career Pathway:** Expansion of sustainability-related career pathways at Western Washington University.
 - **WSU Data Science Career Explore:** Expansion of data science career exploration programs in collaboration with Washington State University and local school districts.
2. **Development of New Programs:**
 - **Seattle Children's STEM Internships and Mobile STEM Lab:** Collaborations with Wenatchee Valley College and Wenatchee School District to develop new opportunities in STEM fields.
 - **Good Jobs Challenge - Tech Sector:** Development of programs to transition tech sector employees to employment through the Good Jobs Challenge grant.
 - **AEM Energy Champions Career Launch:** Potential development of a clean energy-focused program based on regional workforce demand.
 - **Boys & Girls Club Of The Columbia Basin Renewable Tech Career Explore:** Potential development of a clean energy-focused program based on regional workforce demand.
3. **Other programs:** As the Network becomes aware of other actors in the space with robust planning and partnerships already in place, they will evaluate and assist as appropriate.

Next Biennium Focus:

1. **Enhanced Collaboration and Data-Driven Planning:**
 - **Regular Data Review and Sharing:** The network will leverage tools and dashboards to monitor regional labor market trends and align strategies accordingly.
 - **Quarterly Partner and Board Meetings:** The North Central CCW Network Executive Board will continue to convene quarterly meetings to foster collaboration among stakeholders.
2. **Sector-Specific Expansions:**
 - **Healthcare Sector:** Develop additional apprenticeships in medical trades, such as programs at Confluence Health, Samaritan Healthcare, and Family Health Centers.

- **Energy Production and Clean Tech:** Focus on emerging opportunities in the clean energy sector, driven by new businesses like Group14 and Sila.
 - **Technology and Manufacturing:** Continue to expand partnerships with tech companies (e.g., Microsoft) and manufacturing firms to create new CCL pathways.
3. **Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA):**
- **Incorporating Student and Family Voices:** The network will refine its strategies based on CLNA data, ensuring that student and family perspectives are integrated into CCL expansion plans.
 - **Equity and Access:** Emphasis will be placed on promoting equity in program design and expansion, with specific attention to underserved populations and rural districts.
4. **Regional Network Role:**
- **Facilitation and Convening:** Act as a convener and facilitator for businesses, education, and workforce entities to create partnerships and advise on regional integration.
 - **Employer Engagement:** Promote employer inclusion in the network's activities to ensure that career pathways meet industry needs and extend directly into the workplace.
 - **Regional Advocacy:** Act as a voice for North Central's businesses, educators and communities to leverage Career Connect WA resources for the region, as well as to attract partnerships from across the state and nation.

By focusing on these targeted actions and leveraging partnerships with educational institutions, employers, and community organizations, the North Central CCL regional network aims to significantly enhance career-connected learning opportunities for students across the region.

This table outlines the measurable goals for expanding career connected learning in the North Central region over the next three years, focusing on adding new programs, expanding existing ones, and increasing overall capacity with specific industry and educational institution partnerships.

Year	New Programs	Industry Sectors	Educational Institutions	Employer Partners	Estimated Slots Per Program	Total New Slots
2025	3	Computer/ Tech/Math, Healthcare, Manufacturing	K-12, Community and Technical Colleges, Apprenticeships	TBD	20-25 Each	~75
	2 (Expanded)	Data Center Operations, Veterinary Technician	Existing Programs	Microsoft, Cascade Veterinary Clinics	Tech: 100-150 Vet: 5-10	~160
2026	4	Clean Energy, Construction,	K-12, Community and	TBD	~50 each	~200

		Healthcare, Technology	Technical Colleges, Apprenticeships			
	Pre-Apprenticeship Expansion	Construction Trades, Manufacturing	K-12, Community and Technical Colleges	TBD	75 (total)	75
2027	5	Aerospace, Technology, Healthcare, Natural Resources	K-12, Community and Technical Colleges, Four-Year Institutions, Apprenticeships	TBD	25 each	125
	Credential Alignment	Multiple	K-12, Community and Technical Colleges	Various	150 (total)	150

Total New Programs by 2027: 12

Total Increased Capacity by 2027: Approximately 785 new slots

Specific Employers (where possible):

- Microsoft, Sabey Data Systems (Data Center Operations)
- Cascade Veterinary Clinics (Veterinary Technician)
- Sila Nanotechnologies, Group14 (Clean Energy)

Approach to Expanding Regional Career Connected Learning

K-12 Partners: The North Central CCW Regional Network will work closely with K-12 partners to expand career connected learning (CCL) opportunities. The network will facilitate collaboration between school district career and technical education (CTE) programs and industry partners to align curriculum with regional workforce needs. Specific strategies include:

1. **Enhanced Dual Credit Programs:** Strengthening dual credit programs to ensure high school students can earn college credits while completing their secondary education.
2. **Career Exploration and Preparation Activities:** Organizing career fairs, industry tours, and job shadowing opportunities to expose students to various career paths.
3. **Teacher/Faculty Development:** Providing teachers with professional development opportunities in local industries to better understand current industry practices and integrate this knowledge into their teaching.
4. **Continued Data Collection/Analysis:** Creating capacity for collection of data and leveraging analysis to allow for data-driven decision making for CTE and other programming that is aligned with regional workforce needs (i.e. CLNA, H2P, Census, BLS, O*net, ERDC).

Community and Technical Colleges: Engagement with community and technical colleges (CTCs) will focus on creating seamless pathways from secondary education to post-secondary credentials and degrees. Actions include:

1. **Program Alignment and Articulation Agreements:** Establishing program alignment and articulation agreements between K-12 and CTCs to ensure smooth transitions for students.
2. **Work-Based Learning Opportunities:** Expanding internships, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities in collaboration with local businesses and industries.
3. **Advisory Committees:** Supporting local CTC's in their continued engagement of advisory committees with representatives from CTCs and industry to regularly review and update curriculum and training programs.

Four-Year Institutions: The regional network will also collaborate with four-year institutions to broaden the scope of CCL programs. Key actions include:

1. **Transfer Pathways:** Facilitating and promoting the development of clear transfer pathways from CTCs to four-year institutions, ensuring students can continue their education seamlessly.
2. **Joint Research and Development Projects:** Encouraging joint research and development projects that involve students, faculty, and industry partners, particularly in high-demand sectors such as healthcare and technology.

Apprenticeship and Labor Partners: Partnerships with apprenticeship programs and labor organizations are crucial for providing students with hands-on training and direct entry into the workforce. The network will:

1. **Expand Apprenticeship Opportunities:** Work with labor unions and industry partners to expand the availability of registered apprenticeship programs in key sectors like construction, technology, manufacturing, and healthcare.
2. **Pre-Apprenticeship Programs:** Collaborate with WSD on a pilot for a pre-apprenticeship program that prepares high school students and recent graduates for entry into apprenticeship opportunities. Potentially scale this programming to other school districts in the region.
3. **Labor Market Alignment:** Ensure that apprenticeship programs are closely aligned with current labor market demands and future workforce trends.

Actions by Other System Actors

For the expansion of CCL to be successful, other system actors must also take specific actions:

1. **Local Governments and Economic Development Agencies:** Provide funding and support for infrastructure and program development, particularly in underserved areas.
2. **Industry and Business Partners:** Actively participate in advisory boards, offer internship and apprenticeship placements, and support curriculum development to ensure alignment with industry needs.
3. **Non-Profit Organizations and Community Groups:** Offer support services such as digital equity measures, career counseling and exploration, and participation in regional career connected learning opportunities.

Ensuring Inclusivity and Reducing Equity Gaps

To ensure that expanded CCL opportunities are inclusive and reduce equity gaps, the regional network will take the following approaches:

1. **Equity-Focused Program Development:** Develop programs with a specific focus on serving underrepresented and underserved populations, including BIPOC students, rural communities, and non-traditional learners.
2. **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Utilize data to identify equity gaps and target resources and interventions where they are most needed. This includes tracking enrollment, completion, and placement rates by demographic groups.
3. **Inclusive Partnerships:** Engage a diverse range of stakeholders, including representatives from underrepresented groups, in the planning and implementation of CCL programs to ensure that their perspectives and needs are considered.

Regional Network Specific Special Activities

The Regional Network has several distinct roles in the CCL landscape apart from these stated partnership activities, to include the following:

1. **Program Builder Support:** Facilitate the formation of partnerships around emerging program concepts; offer technical support for Program Builder application processes and project implementation; connect Program Builders with regional and statewide resources and with each other.
2. **Regional CCL Event Coordination/Facilitation:** Provide district-level coordination, leadership, and vision for multi-school-district events, projects, and learning opportunities.

3. **Regional Advocacy and Awareness:** Raise concerns and issues specific to the North Central Region to state-level ears and eyes; advocate for more resources and support; share good news of good work well done in our area.
4. **Convene regional CCL actors:** North Central's "secret sauce" is that the Program Builders, employers, educators and workforce entities involved in CCL meet as a collective group quarterly to share successes, advise one another on best practices, identify solutions to issues and support one another.

Key Milestones

I. Increased alignment of pathways across K-12, Higher Ed and Workforce with the following milestones

Major Milestones	Timeline/Metrics	Regional Network Role
1. Expanded Access to CTE Dual Credit	Audit by June 2025; Plan for 2025-27	Conduct audit of CTE dual credit programs and identify areas of need and equity gaps. Facilitate collaboration between school districts and postsecondary for articulation and integration in alignment with regional priorities.
2. Expanded Access to Industry Recognized Credentials	Identify needed credentials by June 2025; Plan for 2025-27	Identify needed credentials in cooperation with local and statewide employers and then advocate for implementation of career pathways in K-12/Postsecondary that are aligned with regional priorities.
3. Work-based learning is a core component of career pathways	Ongoing	Continue to identify employers who are willing to host work-based learning opportunities (to include tours, job shadows, internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training) and connect with education/workforce partners.
4. Pathway alignment with workforce training programs and post secondary programs	Completed with this document: colleges and WF board plans released in 2024	Align expansion plan priorities with college and workforce board strategic priorities.
5. Collaboration across school districts to share best-practices in supporting students	Ongoing	Play active role in convening, advising, and supporting K12 programs and articulations with postsecondary institutions; assist with Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) process districtwide.
6. Engagement and regional collaboration to maximize workforce development potential	Ongoing	Convene executive board meetings open to public; play active role in workforce collaboration and career pathway prioritization.

II. Programs are articulated and aligned to Local Labor Market Demands with the following milestones:

Major Milestones	Timeline	Regional Network Role
1. Employers are engaged in a skills-mapping	Ongoing	Promote employer inclusion in Network Executive Board, CTE/college advisory teams, and sector partnerships.
2. Postsecondary and secondary pathways are aligned	Ongoing; Equity gap analysis by June 2027	Continued collaboration and facilitation of partnerships between K12 and postsecondary to identify and articulate specific pathways for students, leveraging dual credit in a more intentional manner leading to meaningful career connected learning opportunities and industry recognized credentials.
3. Partners collaborate to assess and improve career pathways	Assess with partners by June 2025; plan for 2025-27 needs; Equity gap analysis by June 2027	Facilitate extensive partnerships across all sectors (education, industry) throughout the region, informed by workforce data and projections. Provide resources and support through CCW channels to construct career pathways needed in the region. Help visualize career pathways for new and expanding career fields.

III. Increased Alignment with Local Employer Needs to Advance Work-Based Learning with the following milestones:

Major Milestones	Timeline	Regional Network Role
1. Career pathways meet industry needs and extend directly into the workplace	Ongoing based on 4 year strategic plans through 2027-28	Continued communications and identification of local needs and current industry recognized credentials.
2. Youth can access and succeed in worksite learning components of programs or pathways	Equity gap analysis by June 2027	Initiate formal needs assessment with educational partners to identify equity gaps/barriers to access for rural/remote and underrepresented student populations. Facilitate equity in program design and expansion; emphasize equity plans in all Program Builder proposals and projects; advocate for

		underserved populations and communities; seek ways to share resources across districts.
3. Youth can access mentoring and training	Equity gap analysis by June 2027	Network identifies and maps employer assets accessible to students and works with NCESD worksite learning coordinator and SkillSource for placement of K12 students in available positions across the region. Partner with other regional organizations for potential student placement opportunities.

IV. Increased programs built with partnering employers across multiple industries, including with statewide employers and initiatives

Industry Sectors Targeted: Agriculture, Healthcare, Energy Production, Manufacturing, Aerospace, Technology, Hospitality, Natural Resources, and Transportation/Logistics

Regional Network Role: Act as convener and facilitator for businesses, education, and workforce entities to create partnerships and advise on regional integration.

Timeline: Ongoing

These will inform the following metrics that indicate progress:

- Result of proposed equity gap analysis
- CL program certification
- Student enrollment
- Apprenticeship development (standards, commitments, hiring)
- Successful PB applications
- Supporting Career Explore & Career Prep programs
- Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) outcomes from regional CTE Directors.