



It is imperative that Perkins Consortia work effectively in order to achieve the greatest benefit for all districts that are a part of the consortium. The representatives from each of the member districts should strive to do the following:

1. Form a shared vision through the setting of consortium goals to establish what would be considered mutually beneficial.

Examples:

- Perkins funds will be used to support CTE programs that meet the employment needs of the region represented by the districts.
- Perkins funds will be used to support CTE teachers by making professional development opportunities available.

2. Establish clear expectations of each member district.

Examples:

- Each member district will conduct a comprehensive local needs assessment as directed by the Department of Education to support the consortium Perkins application.
- Each member district representative will attend meetings of the consortium.

3. Commit to active participation and effective communication

Examples:

- Perkins contacts will be responsive to communications from the consortium lead.
- The consortium lead will keep all members informed of information from the Department.

4. All members maintain a collaborative and collegial relationship

5. All members are willing to share resources, knowledge, and best practices

This FAQ is intended to help Perkins consortia be effective and to answer some commonly asked questions regarding the funding and operations of Perkins consortia. Contact Career and Technical Education (CTE) Bureau Chief Dennis Harden with questions <mailto:dennis.harden@iowa.gov>.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why are there Perkins consortia?

The Perkins Act does not allow a local education agency (LEA) to receive an allocation unless the allocation is greater than \$15,000¹. An LEA with an allocation below the minimum of \$15,000 must join a consortium to meet program requirements² and access mutual benefits provided by the consortium partnership³.

2. How are Perkins funds allocated to a consortium?

The Perkins Act establishes a formula that is used to calculate an allocation for an LEA based on district population - 30% of the district population of 5-17 year olds and 70% of economically disadvantaged 5-17 year olds⁴. Districts that are members of a Perkins consortium pool their district allocations to meet the minimum \$15,000 threshold to be eligible for Perkins funds⁵. A **fiscal agent** must be designated to administer the consortium funds.

A **fiscal agent** is an entity (not a person) that has been empowered to handle fiscal matters for another entity, including disbursement or passing through of funds. Serving as the fiscal agent does not equate to being a grant recipient. In Perkins, the consortium of districts is the grant recipient.

For purposes of the Perkins grant, the fiscal agent may be any of the following:

- Public School District/Local Education Agency (LEA)
- Area Education Agency (AEA)
- Community College

The fiscal agent of the consortium has the following responsibilities:

- Receive Perkins grant funds from the Iowa Department of Education (Department) on behalf of the consortium.
- Reimburse school districts for approved expenditures once funds from the Department are received.
- Maintain consortium fiscal records (fund accounting).
- Provide fund accounting information to consortium member school districts.

3. Who determines how Perkins funds are allocated in a consortium?

All school district members of the consortium must have input and determine how Perkins allocations benefit the consortium as a whole. It is not the duty of the designated fiscal agent to determine how funds should be spent. Communication must be ongoing among each district's grant point person, their respective business office and the fiscal agent.

4. How should funding decisions be determined by a consortium?

¹ SEC. 131. [20 U.S.C. 2351] (c)

² SEC. 135. [20 U.S.C. 2355] (b)

³ SEC. 131. [20 U.S.C. 2351] (f)

⁴ SEC. 131. [20 U.S.C. 2351] (a)

⁵ SEC. 131. [20 U.S.C. 2351] (c)

The consortium may support only Department approved CTE programs and the priorities should be based on the outcomes of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA). Funding decisions should be supported by the goals and strategies identified in the consortium's Perkins Local Plan and result in program improvements. Funds must be used as agreed upon by all consortium members as being mutually beneficial. A formula may not be used for fund distribution.

5. If consortium members agree, can the consortium grant back or reallocate funds back to member districts in the amount of the district's Perkins allocation?

No, a consortium cannot reallocate funds back to members in the amounts of their original allocations[§131(f)(2)].

6. If a member school district does not spend their allocation during a program year, may the unspent funds be used by other consortium members?

Yes, the funds shall be used only for purposes and programs that are mutually beneficial to all members of the consortium, and can be used only for approved programs. The consortium leadership agrees on how the funding is repurposed based upon the CLNA priorities [§131(f)(2)].

7. If consortium members agree, can the same school district receive the majority of funds year after year.

No, one school district cannot dominate funds year after year.

8. If the consortium members agree, can funds be allocated solely to professional development in a given year?

Yes, the funds could be used solely for professional development needs in a given year [§131(f)] as long as the rationale includes how professional development aligns with the CLNA priorities.

9. Can equipment be purchased and shared by consortium members?

Yes, items purchased with Perkins funds belong to the consortium. Inventory records, including item location, must be kept current.

10. What are the inventory requirements?

- All secondary district purchases greater than or equal to \$500 must be included on an inventory list that is available to all members of the consortium. Federal regulations require specific information be included in the inventory list for items purchased with Perkins. Iowa has created a template with the federally required fields.
- Note that in accordance with state auditing requirements, all equipment must also be listed in the district member's capital assets and identified as an asset of the Perkins consortium.
- When the school district receives the equipment, the item must be added to the asset list and when the equipment moves to another school district in the consortium, the inventory record must indicate the location change and the

receiving school district must list the item in their assets. As an internal control, this process must be continued in order to document the asset.

11. Who is responsible for maintaining fiscal records within the consortium?

The fiscal agent retains records for the member districts for five years.

12. Are member school districts responsible for maintaining documentation for Perkins inventory in their possession?

Yes. Member school district inventory must match the master inventory list.

The school districts maintain their individual school district fiscal records for five years.

13. What are administrative costs?

- Administrative costs include grant management, administrative duties, record keeping, and program reports.
- Individuals who are paid from an indirect cost plan cannot charge time to the grant as their salaries come out of indirect costs.
- Time and effort documentation must be kept for CTE staff whose duties are less than full time. Time and effort documentation is not required for CTE staff whose duties are 100% CTE. Job descriptions are required for both full and part time staff.

14. How much can the consortium fiscal agent charge for administrative costs?

Up to 5% of the Allocation total.

15. Can each member school district charge 5% of their allocation for administrative costs?

No. Only the fiscal agent may claim administrative costs.

16. What are the ramifications if our district wants to leave our current consortium?

- The school district must first determine if their individual allocation is above the \$15,000 federally required threshold.
- The school district should consider if enrollment is decreasing and could fall below the \$15,000 threshold.
- Baseline [Perkins V indicators of performance](#) will need to be recalculated for the school district.
- Perkins V indicators of performance targets will have to be established for the school district.
- The school district will take on fiscal agent responsibilities or contract with another agency at an administrative rate of no more than 5%.
- All Perkins inventory is owned by the consortium and all equipment within the federal definition of “useful life” is returned to the consortium that the district is leaving.

- Plan at least six months to align your district comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA) with your first Perkins V local application; Fiscal Year allocations are posted with the funding opportunity in IowaGrants on May 1.

17. What is the process if our district wants to leave our current consortium?

- Plan for the process to take 18-24 months.
- Meet with the consortium leadership and determine if this is the best course of action or if there are alternatives.
- Determine enrollment patterns and if your district is likely to maintain the \$15,000 threshold for a sustained period of time.
- Contact the CTE Bureau Chief at the Iowa Department of Education in the very early stages of the process for an initial discussion.
- Determine the inventory under the federal definition of “useful life” and the feasibility of returning the equipment to the consortium.
- Determine if the district has the capacity to complete the CLNA, Perkins Application, and quarterly claim reimbursement process.

Appendix A

Example 1:

- A consortium of **five school districts** with a combined allocation of **\$56,923**.
- The consortium reviews and compares each district's CTE-approved programs with the labor market needs of each CTE program.
- The consortium will focus on **manufacturing, culinary, and health science** with the objective of increasing the number of CTE concentrators (two Carnegie units) available for the workforce or postsecondary training upon high school graduation.
- Consortium leaders decide to use Perkins to address size, scope, quality and student performance.
- **Size:** Sufficient numbers of enrolled students remain as concentrators (two Carnegie units).
- **Scope:** Each district offers enough CTE programs to meet regional industry needs.
- **Quality:** High quality CTE programs have the following elements:
 - Equipment meets or exceeds industry standards.
 - CTE student performance meets or exceeds non-CTE student performance.
 - Non-traditional and special population participation is proportional to the student body.
 - Non-traditional and special populations perform as well other CTE students.
 - Work-based learning opportunities are available.
 - Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) opportunities are offered in CTE program areas.
 - CLNA priorities that are mutually beneficial to the five school districts.

Based upon the objectives, the consortium members establish a budget for the academic year:

1. **Work-based learning. \$0.00.** Work-based opportunities are offered in the CTE program area. School districts commit to fund WBL at the local level. School districts agree to focus on increased engagement and relationship building that incentivizes local business and industry to fund transportation, provide guest speakers in-class, and industry tours.
2. **CTE staff professional development and student certifications. \$12,500.** Professional development for staff. Fund student certifications in all program areas including AWS, ProStart and CNA).
3. **Equipment. \$44,423.** Welders, software, culinary and health science equipment.

Common Perkins Consortium Model

<u>Duties and or Functions</u>	<u>School District CTE Contact</u>	<u>School District Consortium Members</u>	<u>Grant Coordinator</u>	<u>Fiscal Agent/ Business Manager</u>
Examples Bold and underlined <u>x</u> = optional	Principal, or designated CTE staff member	Principal, CTE instructors, staff members or business managers	AEAs, principals, a community college CTE contact or business manager or another designated CTE experienced coordinator.	AEAs, a school district or community college business manager
Administrative				
<u>Duties and or Functions</u>	<u>School District CTE Contact</u>	<u>School District Consortium Members</u>	<u>Grant Coordinator</u>	<u>Fiscal Agent/ Business Manager</u>
Selects the fiscal agent (School District Consensus)	x	x		
Selects a Grant Coordinator (School District Consensus)	x	x		
Authorized representative on the consortium board	x	x-Business manager	x	x
Collaborates with Grant Coordinator and fiscal agent	x	x-Business manager	x	x
Facilitates local CTE planning meetings	x	x		
Schedules consortium meetings			x	
Attends consortium meetings.	x	<u>x</u>	x	x
Coordinates local school district meetings with CTE staff	x			
Submits the annual grant application and completes all reporting requirements on behalf of the consortium.			x	x
Fiscal				
Submit local budgets to the grant coordinator	x			
Reviews and determines consortium budget that is mutually beneficial to all consortium members	x	x	x	x
Submits quarterly district claims to fiscal agent	x			
Submits quarterly district claims and distributes reimbursements to consortium members				x
Maintains all consortium fiscal documentation				x
Maintains all local school district fiscal documentation		x-Business manager		x
Maintains federally compliant consortium inventory list of purchases made with Perkins funding including location				x
Labels Perkins purchases that meet or exceed \$500 and a local inventory list.	x	x		

<u>Duties and or Functions</u>	<u>School District CTE Contact</u>	<u>School District Consortium Members</u>	<u>Grant Coordinator</u>	<u>Fiscal Agent/ Business Manager</u>
Convenes member districts and fiscal agent annually to review monitoring and desk audit requirements.			x	
Convenes member districts and fiscal agent annually to review the implementation of the Perkins V Local Plan.			x	
Convenes member districts and fiscal agent annually to review the master inventory list and review the location of a shared inventory list.			x	
Maintains all budget application approvals, justifications, and consortium agreements.		x		x
Seeks prior approval for purchases not specifically approved in the annual Perkins budget.	x	x	<u>x</u>	x
Compliance, Monitoring, and Accountability				
Responsible for ensuring the use of all grant funds by the end of each academic year.	x	x	x	x
Ensures Perkins is carried out by the consortium members in accordance with federal law	x		x	x
Assists school districts through regular communication.	x		x	x
Assists school districts through Perkins Consortium Plan implementation through 2024.	x		x	x
CLNA Alignment, CTE Programming and Data Reporting				
Develops annual Perkins Grant Application	x		x	
Submits annual grant application.			x	
SRI and SCTERA entry and review with local staff	x	x	-	
Completes local CLNA every two years	x	x	x	x
Reviews CTE student demographic and performance data with member school districts.	x		x	
Program alignment with regional labor market data	x	x	<u>x</u>	
Reviews the six Perkins Elements with local staff.	x		x	

For any questions about this information, please contact Dennis Harden (dennis.harden@iowa.gov).