

IACTE Strategic Plan 2026–2029

This plan outlines the Illinois Association for Career and Technical Education's goals and activities for 2026–2029.

Pillar 1: Professional Learning & Affiliate Development

- **Goal 1:** Deliver aligned, high-quality, and accessible professional learning opportunities at the state, regional, and affiliate levels for all members.
- **Goal 2:** Provide every affiliate with consistent access to leadership training, collaboration opportunities, and program supports that build organizational sustainability.
- **Goal 3:** Expand and strengthen professional learning for new teachers to help retain early-career educators and improve classroom success.
- **Goal 4:** Equip members to confidently engage employers, ensuring every program has access to strong, effective business and industry partnerships.

Pillar 2: Advocacy & Legislative Engagement

- **Goal 1:** Equip IACTE members with the tools and knowledge to communicate the value of CTE and influence policy at local, state, and federal levels.
- **Goal 2:** Elevate the visibility and awareness of CTE among policymakers and the public so that CTE is recognized as a top workforce and education priority through sustained visibility, media engagement, and statewide campaigns.
- **Goal 3:** Advance proactive CTE legislation and policy priorities by championing and supporting measures that expand CTE opportunities, resources, and recognition in Illinois and nationwide.

Pillar 3: Membership, Marketing & Communications

- **Goal 1:** Grow and retain IACTE membership across affiliates by expanding outreach, improving retention, and engaging underrepresented groups.
- **Goal 2:** Increase statewide visibility and awareness of CTE through marketing campaigns that highlight pathways, programs, and student success stories.
- **Goal 3:** Strengthen communications by sharing student, teacher, and program stories across multiple platforms to amplify the association's voice and member value.

Pillar 4: Workforce Development & Strategic Partnerships

- **Goal 1:** Build strong partnerships with employers and workforce organizations to support CTE initiatives statewide.
- **Goal 2:** Create meaningful engagement opportunities between educators and employers to ensure CTE programs are responsive, informed, and aligned with workforce needs.
- **Goal 3:** Strengthen collaboration between secondary and postsecondary programs through regular engagement opportunities and by highlighting best practices.

Pillar 5: Leadership Development & Recognition

- **Goal 1:** Develop sustainable pipelines that identify, train, and mentor emerging leaders to ensure long-term organizational strength and continuity.
- **Goal 2:** Expand leadership opportunities at the state, regional, and national levels, supported by IACTE training, mentorship, and active encouragement.
- **Goal 3:** Recognize and celebrate excellence in CTE leadership and programs through statewide and national recognition efforts.

Activities Aligned to Goals

Pillar 1: Professional Learning & Affiliate Development

Goal 1: Ensure all professional learning opportunities, at the state, regional, and affiliate levels, are aligned, high-quality, and accessible for all members

- Align conference, affiliate, and online PD topics (secondary and postsecondary) to reinforce shared priorities.
- Provide ongoing webinars and virtual PD to increase access.
- Evaluate PD offerings annually for relevance and quality.

Goal 2: Every affiliate will have consistent access to leadership training, collaboration opportunities, and program support to build organizational sustainability.

- Host an annual Affiliate Leadership Training.
- Provide affiliate leaders opportunities for best-practice sharing and structured collaboration.
- Collaborate with affiliates and postsecondary partners to expand programs such as the VIP Program.

Goal 3: Expand and strengthen professional learning for new teachers to help retain early-career educators and improve their classroom success.

- Continue to expand the New & Nearly New CTE Teacher Professional Learning program for secondary and postsecondary instructors.
- Provide targeted resources and support for early-career educators.
- Build in mentoring and networking opportunities for new teachers.

Goal 4: Support members to confidently engage employers, ensuring every program has access to strong, effective business and industry partnerships.

- Develop and deliver PD focused on effective business engagement (e.g., advisory board practices).
- Partner with employers to host joint professional learning opportunities.
- Share models of exemplary advisory and partnership structures across affiliates.

Pillar 2: Advocacy & Legislative Engagement

Goal 1: Equip IACTE members with the tools and knowledge to communicate the value of CTE and influence policy at local, state, and federal levels.

- Develop and distribute an annual IACTE Legislative Platform.
- Create and deliver a Legislative 101 resource and training.
- Expand legislative engagement opportunities for members.

Goal 2: Increase visibility and awareness of CTE among policymakers and the public to be seen as a top workforce and education priority through sustained visibility, media engagement, and statewide campaigns.

- Partner with businesses for joint advocacy initiatives.
- Promote CTE to legislators through targeted media, events, and direct engagement.
- Coordinate an annual statewide CTE Month Proclamation campaign.
- Organize media tours highlighting secondary and postsecondary programs.

Goal 3: Advance proactive CTE legislation and policy priorities and champion and support legislation that expands CTE opportunities, resources, and recognition in Illinois and nationwide..

- Encourage and support introduction of CTE-focused legislation.
- Engage with ACTE's federal priorities and promote member participation in National Policy Seminar.
- Build partnerships with policymakers to champion long-term CTE investments.

Pillar 3: Membership, Marketing & Communications

Goal 1: Grow and retain IACTE membership across affiliates by expanding outreach, improving retention, and engaging underrepresented groups.

- Support affiliate membership drives and targeted outreach to new and underrepresented groups.
- Implement strategies to strengthen retention and engagement.
- Provide resources to affiliates to highlight membership benefits.

Goal 2: Increase visibility and awareness of CTE statewide through marketing campaigns that highlight CTE pathways, programs, and student success stories.

- Create a central online resource library for CTE Month materials and advocacy tools.
- Launch an annual statewide marketing campaign showcasing CTE programs (secondary and postsecondary).
- Collaborate with Illinois CTSOs to highlight student leadership and pathways.

Goal 3: Strengthen communications through student, teacher, and program stories across multiple platforms to amplify the association's voice and member value.

- Establish a student media team to produce testimonials, videos, and stories.
- Publish regular newsletters and digital updates to highlight member achievements.
- Maintain an up-to-date website and consistent social media presence.

Pillar 4: Workforce Development & Strategic Partnerships

Goal 1: Build strong partnerships with employers and workforce organizations through robust employer partnerships supporting CTE initiatives statewide.

- Host a statewide industry advisory session at the IACTE Conference.
- Launch an Employer Partnership Spotlight series to highlight exemplary collaborations.
- Identify and partner with business and industry associations to support IACTE initiatives.

Goal 2: Create meaningful engagement opportunities between educators and employers ensuring CTE programs are responsive, informed, and aligned with real workforce needs.

- Develop sponsorship packages tied to advocacy and workforce initiatives.
- Facilitate employer panels, tours, and site visits at conferences and events.
- Share best practices for employer engagement across affiliates.

Goal 3: Strengthen collaboration between secondary and postsecondary programs through consistent collaboration opportunities and highlighting best practices.

- Promote collaboration between secondary and postsecondary institutions to improve pathway alignment and expand dual credit opportunities.
- Align with state advisory councils to ensure unified messaging on workforce priorities.
- Highlight models of effective secondary–postsecondary–industry partnerships.

Pillar 5: Leadership Development & Recognition

Goal 1: Develop sustainable pipelines that identify, train, and mentor emerging leaders, ensuring long-term organizational strength and continuity.

- Launch the IACTE Fellows Program to prepare future leaders.
- Provide leadership training and mentoring opportunities.
- Encourage affiliates to nominate emerging leaders for IACTE involvement.

Goal 2: Expand leadership opportunities at the state, regional, and national levels supported by IACTE training, mentorship, and active encouragement.

- Implement a mentorship program pairing new board and committee members with experienced leaders.
- Promote ACTE and Region III leadership development programs to Illinois members.
- Increase Illinois representation in ACTE and Region III committees and initiatives.

Goal 3: Recognize and celebrate excellence in CTE leadership and programs through statewide and national recognition.

- Expand recognition of outstanding members through IACTE Awards and nominations to ACTE awards.
- Highlight both secondary and postsecondary leaders through recognition programs.
- Partner with affiliates to promote recognition at the local level.