



**OKLAHOMA**  
**CareerTech**

OKLAHOMA'S WORKFORCE LEADER

# BUSINESS PLAN

## 2026





OKLAHOMA  
CareerTech

# A LEGACY OF INNOVATION



“The workplace is changing, and the pace of change is accelerating. So, the question really is, ‘How do we best prepare ourselves to cope effectively with this change, and where possible, how can we anticipate it, plan for it, manage it, and in some cases, influence it to our advantage?’”

— Dr. Francis Tuttle, “Relating Workforce Needs,”  
Birmingham, Alabama, April 26, 1983

At left, a student operates a punched card sorter in Norman in 1967.



The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education is focused on developing a world-class workforce through educational experiences offered by a network of PK-12 school districts, technology center districts, skills center sites and adult education and family literacy providers.

CareerTech's goal is to improve Oklahoma's economy by providing individuals with training and skills necessary to succeed in the workplace and providing companies the workforce they need to compete globally. To meet the state's workforce demands, CareerTech leverages business/educational partnerships to enhance career awareness and increase educational attainment for all Oklahomans.

CareerTech's business plan highlights the critical need for workforce development and the available resources for filling the gap.



# Executive Summary



## OUR VISION

Securing Oklahoma's future by developing a world-class workforce.



## OUR MISSION

Preparing Oklahomans to succeed in the workplace, in education and in life.



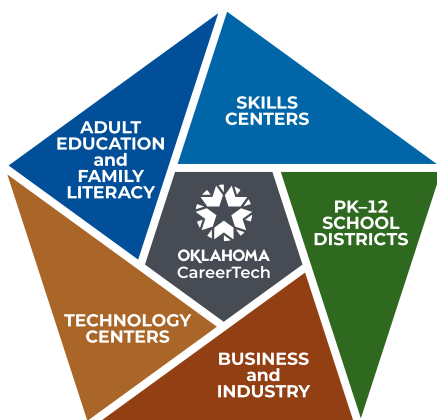
## OUR GOALS

- Educational attainment
- Career awareness and planning
- Business/educational partnerships
- Agency operations and field support



## OUR VALUES

- We believe in...
- High-quality educational experiences
- Data-informed decisions
- Service to our customers and stakeholders
- Innovation, flexibility and accountability
- Equal access for Oklahomans





Oklahoma CareerTech's systemwide enrollments numbered **517,752** in fiscal 2025.

Ninety Oklahomans are earning teaching certificates while working at schools through a new initiative, the Teaching to Teach Apprenticeship Program. The program is a partnership among Oklahoma CareerTech, the Regional University System of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Workforce Commission. It is designed to increase the number of certified teachers by providing scholarships to education students already employed in a school district, technology center or early learning center.

In fiscal year 2024, Oklahoma CareerTech students earned **34,771** industry certifications, while higher education students earned **38,290** diplomas. The average student debt for a CareerTech certification averaged **\$30.85**, compared with **\$16,638.05** for a higher education diploma.

The state invested **\$5,938** per CareerTech certification in fiscal 2024, compared with **\$21,830.77** per higher education diploma.

CareerTech tuition costs totaled **\$32.9 million** in fiscal 2024, while higher education tuition costs topped **\$1.5 billion**.

# CareerTech Delivers

**TSA**  
34,227

**FFA**  
29,507

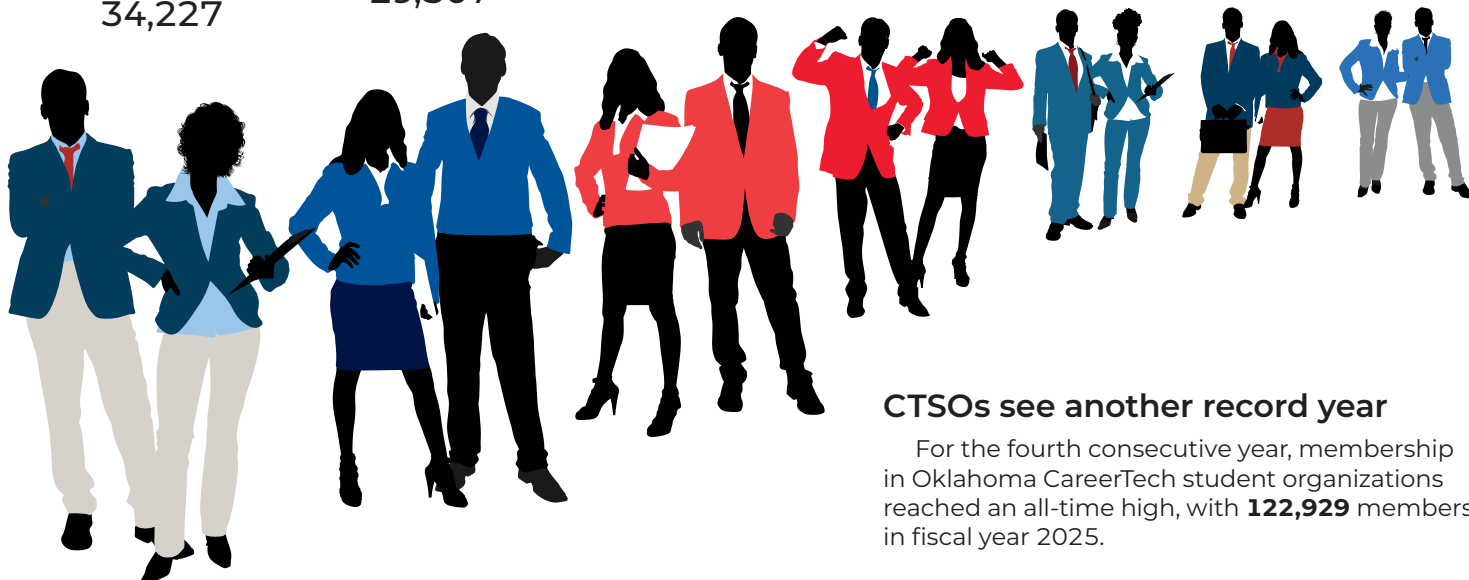
**FCCLA**  
24,209

**SkillsUSA**  
18,270

**hosa**  
7,772

**bpa**  
7,389

**DECA**  
1,555



## CTSOs see another record year

For the fourth consecutive year, membership in Oklahoma CareerTech student organizations reached an all-time high, with **122,929** members in fiscal year 2025.





# Business Spotlight

## Powering progress together

Keeping the lights on takes more than electricity. It takes people with the right skills.

For the past five years, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative and Caddo Kiowa Technology Center have worked side by side to train and grow Oklahoma's energy workforce. That collaboration earned WFEC the 2025 Partner in Progress Award.

Together, the organizations have delivered 33 customized training sessions for more than 570 WFEC employees, totaling more than 4,500 contact hours.

"CKTC provides a comprehensive range of training services for WFEC, such as CPR/first aid, defensive driving, load securement and fit testing," said Shawn Adams, CKTC business and workforce development coordinator.

WFEC also participates in the Wichita Valley Leadership Program to help employees develop professional skills alongside their technical training.

A recent highlight of the partnership is WFEC's instrumental role in CKTC's new lineman training program. WFEC supported curriculum development, assisted with pole installation and opened its substations for hands-on tours, giving students real-world learning opportunities.

WFEC has allowed students to participate in job shadowing, providing invaluable hands-on experience and expanded career opportunities. This investment not only benefits WFEC's workforce but also builds a pipeline of skilled linemen to serve Oklahoma for years to come.

"One of the greatest impacts of this partnership has been in the development of our lineman training program," said Jennie Nunn, CKTC

superintendent. "With input from WFEC, we have been able to create a program that mirrors industry standards, provides students with the skills and opens pathways to meaningful, high-demand careers."

What sets WFEC apart as a partner is its high level of collaboration and dedication. WFEC consistently provides insightful feedback and assistance on CKTC programs and is willing to help in any capacity, ensuring program success. That active involvement was a key reason it was chosen as CKTC's 2025 Partner in Progress.

Founded in 1941, WFEC has grown into Oklahoma's largest locally owned power supply system. From its headquarters in Anadarko, WFEC oversees several generating facilities in Oklahoma and in Lovington, New Mexico, keeping homes, farms and businesses connected to reliable, affordable electricity.

The partnership between CKTC and WFEC is a model of collaboration. By working together to deliver meaningful training, develop new programs and prepare the next generation of workers, both organizations are strengthening the region's economy and ensuring a brighter future for Oklahoma.



Shawn Adams, Caddo Kiowa Technology Center Business and Workforce Development coordinator; Mike Newell, CKTC assistant superintendent; John Noel, CKTC Business and Industry Services director; Dale Lewis, CKTC Industrial/Truck Driver Training coordinator; Mark Sage, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative manager; Jennie Nunn, CKTC Superintendent; and Skye McNiel, OkACTE executive director.





# Appropriations Request FY27

## Investing in Oklahomans

**FY26 General Appropriation . . . . . \$175,562,874**

▶ **Meet the statutory requirement of funding the flex benefit allowance for the technology centers (Title 70. Schools §70-26-104) . . . . . \$1,300,000**  
(tentative)

▶ **Workforce Training . . . . . \$31,650,000**  
Investment to meet the increased need for a trained workforce, by increasing full-time program enrollments by 10,000 over the next five years.  
» \$41,650,000 minus \$10,000,000

▶ **K-12 CareerTech Program Support. . . . . \$5,500,000**  
Increase support to growing number of new K-12 CTE programs. Increase supplement for K-12 CTE instructors for additional reporting requirements.

▶ **Technology Center Expansion Incentive . . . . . \$10,000,000**  
Allocations available to technology centers to expand services into areas of Oklahoma not currently served by a technology center (a one-time request).

▶ **Career Exploration . . . . . \$20,000,000**  
Allocations for technology center districts to expand services for career exploration.

**Total FY27 Appropriations Increase Requested . . . . . \$68,450,000**

**TOTAL FY27 Appropriations Request . . . . . \$244,012,874**



## CareerTech Champion Kaitlyn Kirksey

# From FCCLA leader to empowering FCS teacher

Kaitlyn Kirksey, an Edmond Public Schools teacher, knows firsthand the transformative power of CareerTech and student organizations. Growing up in Stillwater, Kirksey joined Family, Career and Community Leaders of America as a freshman after being encouraged by her family and consumer sciences teacher in junior high school.

"I had taken an FCS class in the eighth grade, and my teacher saw leadership potential in me that I didn't even know I had," Kirksey said. "She encouraged me to run for office and I ended up serving as chapter president that year."

From there, Kirksey's leadership journey took off. She held various officer positions throughout high school and served as Oklahoma FCCLA's state vice president of public relations during her junior year.

One of Kirksey's most impactful experiences as a student was advocating at the Oklahoma State Capitol on behalf of FCCLA and FCS education. Those moments gave her the confidence to use her voice in areas she is passionate about and helped her realize the long-lasting impact of advocacy.

"FCCLA taught me the value of teamwork, problem-solving and the importance of diverse perspectives," Kirksey said. "It also gave me the courage to speak up for myself and for the things that matter to me and those around me."

Her time in FCCLA left a lasting impression, particularly her role on the State Executive Council. The leadership experiences she gained while connecting with peers across the state helped shape her approach



**I believe CareerTech offers students a wide range of pathways that don't necessarily require a college degree but still set them up for long-term success. For those who do pursue higher education, CareerTech experiences provide transferable skills that will only enhance their career prospects.**

**KAITLYN KIRKSEY**  
CareerTech Champion

to future opportunities in both college and her career.

After graduating from Stillwater High School, Kirksey attended Oklahoma State University, where she earned a degree in human development and family sciences with a focus on FCS education. Inspired by her own FCS teachers, she chose to become an educator to empower the next generation of leaders.

"I wouldn't be the person I am today if my FCS teachers hadn't believed in me and given me the opportunities to grow," Kirksey said. "I wanted to do the same for my students, and I hope I have."

As an FCS teacher, Kirksey is passionate about changing misconceptions about the field.

"I want people to understand that FCS is more than just cooking and sewing," Kirksey said. "We equip students with industry skills and competencies that prepare them for successful careers."

Kirksey also advocates for the value of CareerTech in a world where college is becoming less accessible.

"I believe CareerTech offers students a wide range of pathways that don't necessarily require a college degree but still set them up for long-term success," she said. "For those who do pursue higher education, CareerTech experiences provide transferable skills that will only enhance their career prospects."

Kirksey finds joy in teaching FCS and is excited to see what the future holds for her students.

"Teaching FCS is my dream job," she said. "I'm grateful to play a small part in my students' lives and I can't wait to see what they'll achieve in the future."



# From VHS to visionary

## CareerTech Champion Tyler Roberds' journey through storytelling



Long before he turned it into a business, Tyler Roberds was drawn to storytelling.

As a child, he asked for a black-and-white toy video camera for Christmas — one that recorded directly to VHS. He didn't know filmmaking could be a career; he just knew it was all he wanted to do.

"I've always liked to entertain," he said. "But as I got older, I found out what I really love is telling stories."

Growing up in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, Roberds was immersed in creativity. His mother taught digital media at Green Country Technology Center and let him tinker with camera equipment and editing software after school. Before he enrolled in the program, he had a working knowledge of professional tools and techniques.

"Digital media was the only thing that made sense for me," he said. "I was already doing video and design projects for fun, so getting into a program where I could do it for a grade — and with professional gear — was a no-brainer."

Today, he owns and operates Roberds Studio, a freelance video and photo business that produces content for clients across Oklahoma — including Green Country, Central and Indian Capital technology centers. He also operates Legacy Records, which focuses on personal, documentary-style videos. These projects preserve the life stories of parents, grandparents and loved ones in their own words, filmed in their own homes.

"It's the most meaningful work I've ever done," Roberds said. "I've interviewed CEOs, senators and musicians — but the most impactful interviews I've done are with regular people. Everyone has a story worth sharing, and I want to help families preserve those powerful, personal stories for generations to come."

Roberds credits Green Country Tech and CareerTech for giving him the tools and the mindset to turn his skills into a sustainable career. One turning point was a class project called "The Big Show." Students were challenged to develop a full business from scratch: concept, branding, marketing and budget.

"It helped me realize I could actually create something real," he said.

He also gained confidence through Business Professionals of America, which gave him a platform to compete and showcase his creative work statewide.

"BPA helped me see myself as a creative professional, not just a kid who liked art," he said.

Though technology has changed dramatically since he was a student, Roberds said CareerTech positioned him to adapt. He remembers a time before smartphones and social media, when video content was rare and most small businesses didn't even have websites.

"It was tough timing," he said. "But I'm glad I stuck with it, because now video is everything. And thanks to CareerTech, I was ready when the world caught up."

# From high school dropout to health care leader

## Elizabeth Worley's CareerTech success story

Elizabeth Worley's journey to a nursing career was one of resilience, perseverance and a deep passion for helping others.

After dropping out of high school at 16, she found work at Cordell Christian Home (now Cordell Nursing and Rehab), where she discovered a passion for patient care. She earned certified nurse aide certification and by 20 had completed her GED. Encouraged by a colleague, she applied to Western Technology Center's practical nursing program in Burns Flat.

"At Western Technology Center, I received the richest clinical experiences with no comparison for my career," Worley said. "I was so prepared for future clinical settings as I advanced in my nursing."

She earned licensed practical nurse certification in 2011, became a registered nurse in 2014 and earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from Oklahoma City University in 2016.

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If someone had told me when I dropped out of high school that I would be doing what I am today, I would have laughed. The WTC practical nursing program was just the beginning. You never know what you're capable of until you try.

**ELIZABETH WORLEY**  
CareerTech Champion

During the pandemic, Worley took on nursing leadership roles and in 2023 became program director at Cordell Memorial Hospital's Senior Life Solutions, an intensive outpatient therapy program focused on senior mental health.

Her career has been marked by achievements. Phi Theta Kappa nominated her for the International Scholar Laureate Program in Australia, where she studied rural health care challenges. She became a nationally certified psychiatric mental health registered nurse and is pursuing a psychiatric mental health nurse



practitioner degree at Duke University, with plans to earn a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree by 2028.

Worley also volunteers as a court-appointed special advocate for children in foster care and dreams of creating an outpatient mental health program to support this vulnerable population.

Her CareerTech experience didn't just prepare her for a job, Worley said; it set the foundation for a lifelong journey in health care, leadership and advocacy.

"The journey is worth it. Part of learning is failing, and though it may feel like the end when you fail, it's an opportunity to become better," she said. "If someone had told me when I dropped out of high school that I would be doing what I am today, I would have laughed. The WTC practical nursing program was just the beginning. You never know what you're capable of until you try."

In 2024, her journey came full circle when her oldest son graduated from WTC's pre-engineering program.





# Fueling workforce success

## The critical need to invest in CareerTech education



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Our state faces serious workforce shortages in key industries. CareerTech is bridging those gaps, and the best part is we aren't finished.

**BRENT HAKEN**  
Oklahoma CareerTech  
State Director

By Brent Haken

It's easy to get lost in the uproar about what's wrong with education in Oklahoma. Are there issues in education? You bet. But there's another story — one that's far too often overlooked. It's the story of students finding purpose, educators sparking transformation, and businesses and communities rallying together to build a brighter future.

Something is going right in Oklahoma education — and CareerTech is a big part of it.

Across our state, students of all ages are gaining skills that matter. They're learning to weld, to code, to care for patients, to manage projects and to launch businesses. They're stepping into the real world with real experience — often before they've even graduated high school.

This is what Oklahoma CareerTech does best.

As Gov. Kevin Stitt continues his mission to improve student test scores and enhance educational outcomes across Oklahoma, career and technical education stands as a critical component in achieving these goals. Stitt's focus on workforce development and increasing apprenticeships aligns with a strong CareerTech foundation. With industries across the state seeking a highly skilled workforce, enhancing CareerTech programs not only boosts test scores but also strengthens Oklahoma's economy by

preparing students for high-paying, in-demand jobs.

As state director of Oklahoma CareerTech, I see success stories every day. A high school junior who earns a professional credential and steps into a job that pays well above minimum wage. A young adult who trains in aerospace maintenance and lands a career with a major defense contractor. A parent who returns to school to gain the skills needed to reenter the workforce with confidence and dignity.

Harleigh Moore-Wilson is an example of how CareerTech can place Oklahomans on a path to success in the workplace and in life.

Growing up in Burbank, Moore immersed herself in raising livestock, competing in junior rodeo and participating in 4-H and FFA. Today, she channels that passion into her consulting firm, Harleigh Moore LLC, strengthening agricultural systems and food sovereignty initiatives for tribal nations across the country.

It was her involvement in FFA at Woodland Public Schools in Fairfax that provided invaluable skills extending beyond the barn.

“FFA played a huge role in shaping me into the person I am today,” she said. “It helped polish my love for public speaking and leadership while giving me countless opportunities to develop teamwork and communication skills.”

This is workforce development in action. And it's happening right here, right now.

Our state faces serious workforce shortages in key industries — health care, manufacturing, transportation and education, to name a few. CareerTech is bridging those gaps, and the best part is we aren't finished. We're aligning programs with employer needs, responding to economic shifts and building pipelines that prepare Oklahomans not just for jobs, but for sustainable careers. We have to adapt to the changing business climate and growing economy in Oklahoma.

And we're not doing it alone.

CareerTech thrives on partnerships — with local school districts, higher



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**HARLEIGH  
MOORE-WILSON**  
CareerTech Champion

education, tribal nations, business leaders and policymakers. These partnerships aren't just symbolic; they're producing tangible results. Businesses are shaping the curriculum, driving the outcomes and need the product. Schools are expanding access to career training. Communities are investing in programs that keep talent local.

We have more than 520,000 enrollments each year in Oklahoma CareerTech programs. That's more than half a million Oklahomans actively pursuing opportunity. And that number includes high school students, adults looking to reskill, incarcerated individuals preparing to reenter society and working professionals seeking advancement.

These aren't just numbers. These are people. These are futures.

Of course, challenges remain. We must continue to invest in modern facilities, cutting-edge equipment and the educators who make it all possible. We must ensure that rural and underserved communities have access to the same opportunities as those in more populated areas. We must continue telling the story of what's working — because it deserves to be told.

There's plenty of work ahead. But when we talk about education in Oklahoma, let's also talk about the progress we're making. Let's recognize that our students are earning credentials, our businesses are hiring CareerTech graduates and our communities are growing stronger because of it. I ask you to jump in to be a part of the solution.

This is more than just education. This is Oklahoma's workforce, our economy and our future.

And that's what's right in Oklahoma education.

For more information about CareerTech programs and where to find them in Oklahoma, go to [oklahoma.gov/careertech](http://oklahoma.gov/careertech).

*Brent Haken is the state director of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education.*





Oklahoma students visit the state Capitol in Oklahoma City as members of the seven co-curricular CareerTech student organizations: Business Professionals of America; DECA; Family, Career and Community Leaders of America; FFA; HOSA; SkillsUSA; and Technology Student Association.



**OKLAHOMA**  
**CareerTech**

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