



Five Best Practices for Equitable Admissions and Recruitment

Career and Technical Education (CTE) empowers learners to succeed in the pathways of their choice. Yet, many have limited access to high-quality CTE programs due to admissions and recruitment oversight towards underrepresented students. Diversifying CTE programs allows all learners to access CTE programs that prepare them for success in high-wage and high-demand careers.

Here are five best practices to guide you in building equity-centered admissions and recruitment for your CTE programs:

1. **Shift the Focus: Celebrate a Diverse Skillset: Many** school counselors rely on standardized tests and GPA requirements, perpetuating existing academic disadvantages for underserved or underrepresented learners. Reframe the narrative! Highlight career exploration and skill development as core benefits of CTE. Prioritize hands-on assessments, portfolios, and interviews that showcase potential beyond traditional metrics.
2. **Speak to Each Voice: Tailor Your Message:** Different populations have unique needs and aspirations. Understand the different communities served. Research what message resonates with specific demographics, whether access to mentors, financial aid, or career connections. Craft targeted messaging that speaks directly to their hopes and concerns.
3. **Open the Doors Wide: Ensure Equitable Information Access:** Knowledge is power, and information shouldn't be a barrier. Ensure all families, regardless of background, can easily access clear, translated resources about your CTE programs. Build user-friendly websites, offer language support, and partner with community-based organizations to spread the word.
4. **Build Bridges, Not Walls: Partner with Your Community:** Connect with feeder schools, community colleges, and local businesses. Develop joint initiatives, career expos, and mentorship programs that showcase the relevance of CTE and inspire underrepresented learners to explore possibilities.
5. **Embrace Continuous Improvement: Data Drives Change:** Regularly evaluate recruitment and admissions data. Identify disparities and actively address them. Seek feedback from learners, families, and community partners to continually refine your strategies. This is an ongoing journey, not a destination.

Increasing representation in CTE programs is not just about numbers; it's about ensuring every learner has equal access to opportunity. By implementing these best practices, CTE can cultivate a vibrant, inclusive learning environment where all learners can thrive. Take the first step today. Open the door to everyone, and watch the future ignite.

Resources: [Communicating Career Technical Education: Learner-centered Messages for Effective Program Recruitment](#) • [Connecting Every Learner: A Framework for States to Increase Access to and Success in Work-Based Learning](#)