



Bridging the Gap: Leveraging Grants to Support CTE for Foster and Homeless Youth

Chico Unified School District
coordinated support model.



PRESENTERS



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Foster & Homeless Youth in California

California student data shows:

- Over 270,000 students identified under McKinney-Vento annually
- Over 60,000 foster youth in California schools
- Higher rates of chronic absenteeism
- Lower graduation and college enrollment rates

Career Technical Education can significantly improve engagement and completion.



Foster & Homeless Youth in Chico Unified

- Predominantly suburban LEA with urban and rural portions
- 2025-2026 School Year
 - 12,333 total LEA enrollment
 - 883 identified MV students so far (7%)
 - 88 Foster Youth (.7%)
- 2024-2025 School Year
 - 12,832 total LEA student enrollment
 - 958 MV students identified (7.5%)
 - 128 Foster Youth (1%)
 - 137 Enrolled in CTE classes
 - 20 Completers
- 2023-2024 School Year
 - 12,088 total LEA Enrollment
 - 820 MV students identified (6.7%)
 - 112 Foster Youth .9%
 - 88 Enrolled in CTE classes
 - 9 Completers



Understanding Our Students

Common challenges include:

Academic: interrupted schooling, credit loss

Social-Emotional: trauma, instability

Logistical: transportation, equipment fees, certification costs

Removing these barriers allows students to fully participate.



Why This Matters

Foster and homeless youth face barriers including:

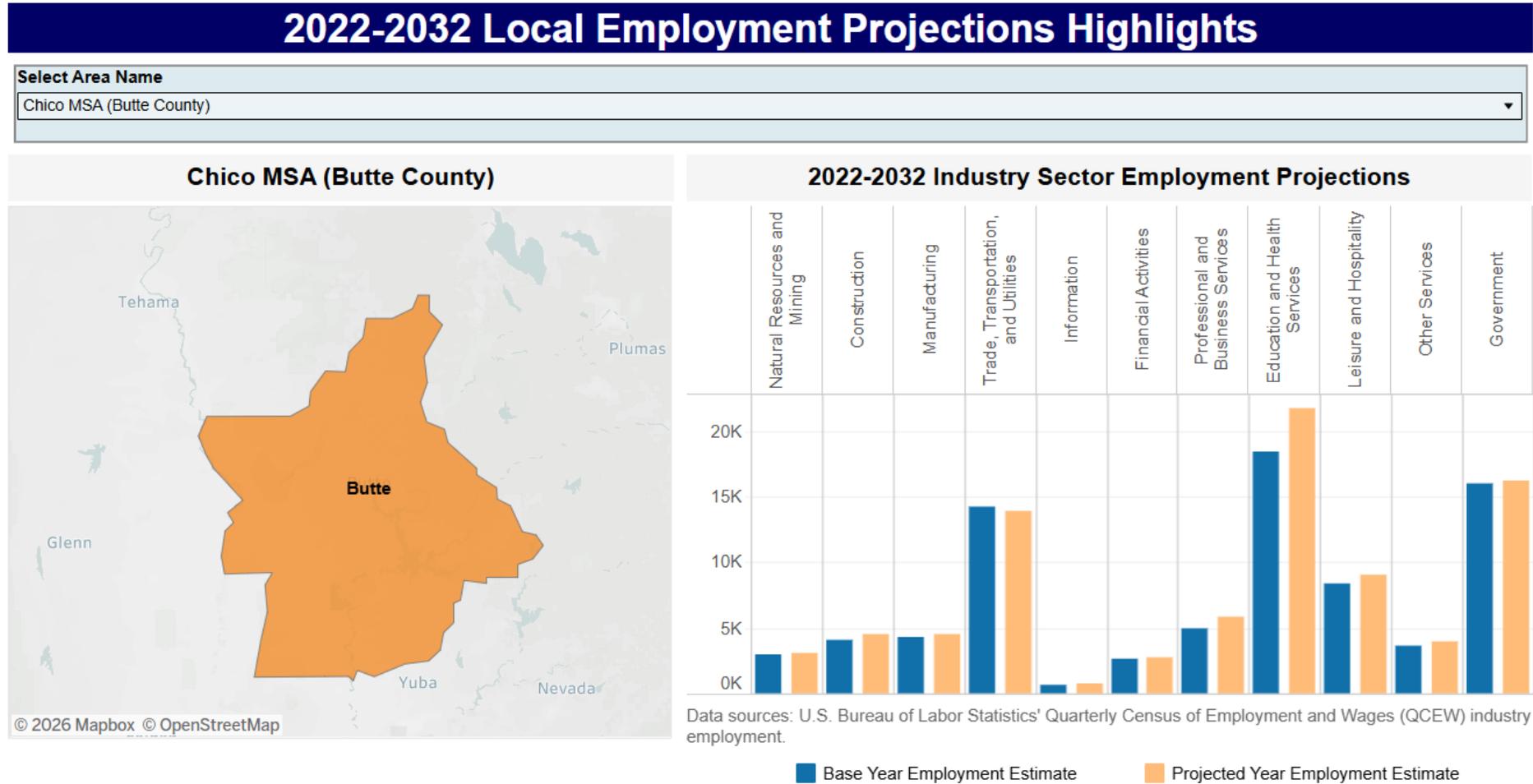
- Frequent school mobility
- Transportation challenges
- Housing instability
- Limited access to career pathways

Career Technical Education (CTE) can provide stability, purpose, and opportunity.



Why Career Technical Education Matters

CTE Pathways are directly tied to labor market data, meaning we are training students for industries that have projected openings.



CTE Outcomes for Homeless and Foster Youth

- Increased school engagement and attendance
- Higher graduation and credit completion rates
- Development of career-ready technical skills
- Access to industry certifications
- Stronger transitions to college, apprenticeships, or employment
- Connections with adult mentors and career networks
- Pathways to long-term economic stability



Improved School Engagement

Students participating in CTE pathways often show:

- Higher **attendance rates**
- Increased **school engagement**
- Greater **sense of belonging**

For students experiencing housing instability or foster placement changes, CTE can provide a **stabilizing connection to school.**



Improved School Engagement

- CTE Pathways have leadership development embedded into the curriculum
- Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) provide opportunities for students to compete in events that use the skills they learn in class
- CTSOs include: Skills USA, FFA, FCCLA, HOSA, DECA, and FBLA



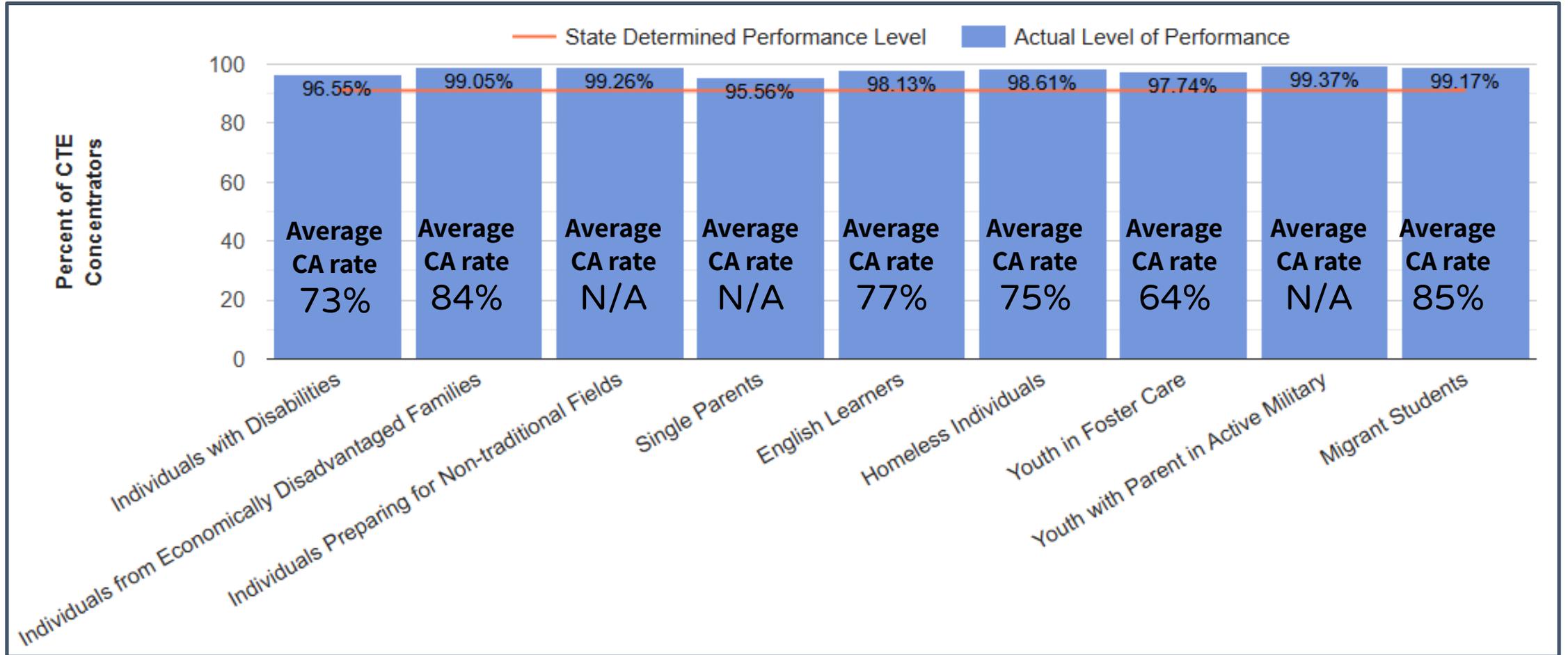
Increased Graduation Rates

- Higher **high school completion rates**
- Greater **persistence through senior year**
- Increased **credit completion**

For foster and homeless youth who may experience **interrupted schooling**, pathway participation can help keep them connected through graduation.



California CTE Special Population Graduation Rates (2024 data)



Stronger Career Readiness

CTE provides students with **industry-aligned skills and certifications**, including:

- Technical skills in specific industries
- Professional communication and teamwork
- Workplace expectations and problem solving

Students gain **real-world experience** through internships, labs, and project-based learning.



Across Chico Unified, students have access to a wide range of Career Technical Education pathways. These pathways connect classroom learning with industry skills, postsecondary education, and real workforce opportunities.

Goal: Ensure foster and homeless youth have equitable access to these pathways through transportation, supplies, certifications, and work-based learning supports.





Pleasant Valley High School

- Agriculture Mechanics
- Architecture Design and CAD
- Ceramics Arts
- Child Development
- Commercial Arts
- Digital Photography
- Education
- Engineering Design and CAD
- Food Service and Hospitality
- Graphic Arts and Design
- Ornamental Horticulture
- Media Arts
- Patient Care
- Public Services
- Software and Systems Development - **New 26-27**



Chico High School

- Agricultural Mechanics
- Architecture Design and CAD
- Business Entrepreneurship - **New 26-27**
- Business Marketing - **New 26-27**
- Ceramic Arts
- Child Development
- Digital Arts
- Digital Photography
- Education
- Engineering Design and CAD
- Floral Design
- Glass Design
- Information Support and Services
- Patient Care
- Ornamental Horticulture
- Software and Systems Development
- Sustainable Agriculture Science



Fairview High School

- Welding - **New 25-26**
- Construction - **New 25-26**
- Media Arts

Visit our [website](#) for more information!



Access to Industry Certifications

CTE programs allow students to earn credentials such as:

- Healthcare certifications (First Aide, CPR, Stop the Bleed)
- Welding or manufacturing certifications (OSHA 10)
- Technology certifications (CompTIA, FAA Drone Pilot)
- Food safety or hospitality certifications (SafeServ, Food Handler)

These certifications help students **enter the workforce immediately after graduation if needed.**



CTE Pathway	Example Careers	Example Certifications / Skills
Software & Systems Development	Software Developer, Cybersecurity Analyst, Network Administrator	Programming (Python/Java), Robotics, CompTIA certifications
Information Support & Services	IT Technician, Network Specialist, Systems Administrator	Computer Hardware Repair, Network Configuration, CompTIA A+
Engineering Design	Mechanical Engineer, Product Designer, CAD Technician	AutoCAD, 3D Modeling, Engineering Design Process
Architecture Design	Architect, Construction Manager, Drafting Technician	Architectural CAD, Design Planning
Patient Care / Health Careers	Registered Nurse, EMT, Medical Technician, Physical Therapist	CPR/AED, Medical Terminology, Clinical Skills
Child Development	Preschool Teacher, Child Development Specialist, Social Worker	Early Childhood Education Skills, Classroom Management
Education Careers	Teacher, School Counselor, Education Specialist	Lesson Planning, Classroom Instruction
Media Arts / Graphic Arts	Graphic Designer, Video Producer, Digital Media Specialist	Adobe Creative Suite, Video Editing, Graphic Design



CTE Pathway	Example Careers	Example Certifications / Skills
Digital Art & Design	Illustrator, Multimedia Artist, Game Designer	Digital Illustration, Animation Tools
Photography	Photographer, Photojournalist, Media Producer	DSLR Photography, Studio Lighting
Ceramics / Visual Arts	Ceramic Artist, Art Educator, Studio Technician	Ceramic Design, Kiln Operations
Glass Design	Glass Artist, Industrial Designer, Artisan	Glass Blowing, Studio Safety
Ornamental Horticulture	Landscape Designer, Nursery Manager,	Plant Identification, Landscape Design
Agricultural Science	Agricultural Scientist, Agronomist, Environmental Specialist	Soil Science, Agricultural Technology
Agriculture Mechanics / Welding	Welder, Fabricator, Heavy Equipment Technician	AWS Welding Skills, Metal Fabrication
Culinary / Food Service	Chef, Restaurant Manager, Food Service Director	Food Safety Certification, Culinary Techniques
Marketing / Entrepreneurship	Marketing Manager, Business Owner, Sales Representative	Business Planning, Digital Marketing



Increased Postsecondary Enrollment

Students involved in CTE pathways often have stronger transitions to:

- **Community college programs**
- **Trade or technical schools**
- **Apprenticeships**
- **Four-year universities**

Many CTE pathways also include **dual enrollment opportunities** with local colleges which provides students free college credits for the classes they are taking in high school.



CCAP Dual Enrollment

Year	State Target	All CTE Completers	w/ Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged	English learners	Homeless	Foster
2020–21	23.9%	21%	11.7%	16.9%	3%	19%	9.1%
2021–22	26.2%	87.1%	92.3%	86.2%	100%	50%	100%
2022–23	26.2%	70.7%	72.2%	74.5%	100%	62.5%	100%
2023–24	26.2%	84.7%	73.3%	83.16%	100%	87.5%	100%
2024 -25	26.2%	98.7%	100%	98.7%	100%	100%	100%



Increased Adult Mentorship

CTE programs connect students with:

- CTE teachers
- Industry professionals
- Internship supervisors
- Workforce mentors

These relationships are especially important for **foster and unaccompanied homeless youth who may lack stable adult support systems.**



Improved Economic Mobility

For youth experiencing instability, CTE can provide a **direct pathway to economic stability**.

Students gain:

- Job-ready skills
- Professional networks
- Paid internships or apprenticeships
- Clear pathways to higher wage careers



How can districts make these goals attainable for homeless and foster students?



Braiding Funding to Support CTE Access

Multiple funding sources can be strategically braided to expand student access to Career Technical Education opportunities and remove barriers to participation.

Examples of coordinated funding sources:

- **Title I, Part A** – supports students experiencing poverty through academic supports, transportation, and college and career readiness activities.
- **McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth** – removes barriers such as transportation, school supplies, and participation fees for students experiencing homelessness.
- **Community Schools and LCAP funds** – expand partnerships, wraparound services, and coordinated supports that help students fully participate in career pathways.



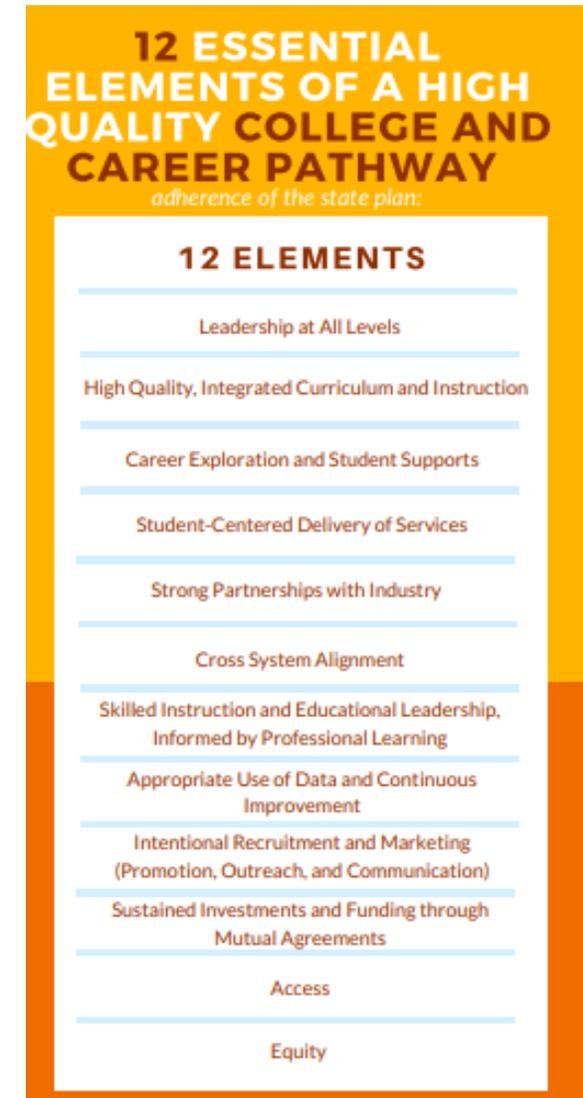
Braiding Funding to Support CTE Access

- **Career Technical Education Incentive Grant (CTEIG)** – strengthens CTE pathways and supports industry-aligned coursework.
- **Perkins-** Strengthens the quality of programs, expands pathways, supports work based Learning Opportunities
- **Golden State Pathways-** Expands dual enrollment, Increase career pipeline.
- **Workforce Partnerships** Connects students to local employers and industry mentors, Supports training and certifications, Strengthens school to career pipelines.
- **LCSSP:** Help remove barriers that contribute to chronic absenteeism and support engagement.



Braiding Funding to Support CTE Access

- The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) reframed the 12 essential elements of a high quality CTE program to have a specific emphasis on access and equity.
- This emphasis allows for the funding of activities that would promote access and equity to special populations.



Examples of Allowable Supports (Check each grant)

Grant funds can help provide:

Transportation to CTE programs

Tools and equipment

Work uniforms or safety gear

Certification exam fees

Dual enrollment support

Internship stipends



Grant Writing Tips

Strategies for successful proposals:

1. Use local student data
2. Emphasize foster and homeless data
3. Clearly identify barriers/supports needed
4. Demonstrate collaboration
5. Provide concrete examples of support
6. Show measurable student impact



Building Strong Partnerships

Successful programs involve collaboration between:

CTE coordinator & CTE TOSA

Foster & Homeless Liaisons

Grant Writer

School Counselors & Targeted Case Managers

Community colleges

Workforce development boards

Local businesses

Community organizations



Case Example: Chico Unified

District strategies include:

- Expanding Targeted Case Managers across school sites
- Increasing identification of McKinney-Vento students
- Partnering with CTE programs to remove participation barriers
- Embed CTE completion in SST/IEP meeting conversations
- Leveraging grants to support transportation, supplies, and certifications



Impact in Chico Unified School District

- McKinney-Vento student identification increased from 1.6% in 2021 to approximately 8% in 2025.
- Targeted Case Manager positions expanded from part-time support at sites to full-time staff across the district.
- Stronger collaboration with district programs including After School Programs, CTE, TUPE, and grant development.
- Partnerships with community organizations to address transportation, food insecurity, and basic needs.
- Expanded parent engagement through the Raising Highly Capable Kids 13-week parenting program with childcare (CTE pathway students) and meals (Made by CTE Pathway Students)



Impact in Chico Unified School District

A targeted approach has led to an increase in CTE completers in our district across all sub groups!

Year	All CTE completers	All CTE completer rate	SWD	Econ disadv	EL	Homeless	Foster com.
2020-2021	226	18.5%	9.3%	15.7%	6.1%	6.3%	9.1%
2021-2022	210	18.8%	14.6%	16.6%	9.1%	9.0%	11.1%
2022-2023	227	22.5%	14.9%	19.6%	2.2%	8.5%	7.7%
2023-2024	247	23.5%	11.7%	22.4%	10.7%	6.0%	7.7%
2024-2025	329	29.7%	26%	27.4%	11.1%	10.9%	18.2%



The Goal

Every student deserves access to opportunity.

When foster and homeless youth are intentionally included in CTE programs:

- Engagement increases
- Graduation rates improve
- Workforce pathways open

Access to opportunity should never depend on housing stability.



Student Success Story: Pathway to Opportunity

- A student experiencing housing instability expressed interest in healthcare careers.
- Through coordination between the McKinney-Vento program and school staff, barriers such as transportation and supplies were addressed.
- The student enrolled in the Patient Care pathway and participated in hands-on learning experiences.
- Career exposure and mentorship helped the student build confidence and envision a post-secondary pathway.
- CTE opportunities provided stability, purpose, and a clear pathway toward a career in healthcare.



Key Takeaways

Supporting foster and homeless youth in CTE requires:

- Intentional access
- Coordinated funding
- Cross-department collaboration
- Strong community partnerships

When barriers are removed, students thrive.



Questions & Discussion

How can we expand CTE access for foster and homeless youth in your district?



Resources

- EDD Employment Projects: <https://labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/data/employment-projections.html#Long>
- O*NET: <https://www.onetonline.org/>
- California Colleges Career Planning: <https://www.californiacolleges.edu/#/>



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