

BUSINESS PLAN 2024



OKLAHOMA
CareerTech





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CareerTech

A LEGACY of FORESIGHT and **PURPOSE**



Dr. Francis Tuttle congratulates Dr. Ann Benson, who, in 1999, became the first woman to lead Oklahoma CareerTech.

“...Francis Tuttle’s first act upon taking over [in 1967] was to set a single salary scale and apply it to every position, rank by rank, across every division. From that day on, women and men who have done the same work have earned the same pay.”

— from *Learning to Earn* by Danney Goble

»»» EXECUTIVE SUMMARY »»»



VISION »»»

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

MISSION »»»

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

GOALS »»»

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

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

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.





CareerTech enrollments rise

Oklahoma CareerTech's total enrollment in fiscal year 2023 rose to **489,635**, or **9.5%** more than 446,940 in fiscal year 2022.

Offering free aerospace curriculum

In 2023, Oklahoma high schools and technology centers were given access to an aerospace training curriculum at no cost. Oklahoma CareerTech is paying for the curriculum, known as **Choose Aerospace**, with federal grants received through the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. Choose Aerospace is a nonprofit group of aerospace industry stakeholders and is managed by the Aviation Technician Education Council.

Expanding inmate training

Thanks in part to a nearly \$900,000 federal grant, more Oklahoma inmates are being offered career training opportunities, empowering them to find jobs upon release. CareerTech's Skills Centers programs offer training at **17 correctional sites across the state**. Some of those Skills Centers sites were added through a December 2021 Department of Justice grant, including Northeast Oklahoma Correctional Center in Vinita.

Goals for growth

Growing participation in CareerTech programs is among the many new goals at Oklahoma CareerTech. They include increasing the number of K-12 students participating in CareerTech programs from 138,000 in fiscal year 2022 to **150,000** by the end of fiscal year 2027. At CareerTech's 29 technology centers, the goal is to grow full-time program enrollments from 30,000 to **40,000** during the same period.

CTSO membership growing

For the second consecutive year, membership in Oklahoma CareerTech student organizations reached an all-time high, with **98,225** members in fiscal year 2023. Individual CTSO membership numbers were **BPA at 6,120; DECA at 1,529; FCCLA at 17,356; FFA at 29,213; HOSA at 6,738; SkillsUSA at 15,546; and TSA at 21,723.**



489,635

Total enrollments
in Oklahoma
CareerTech offerings



London baker has strong CareerTech ties in Oklahoma

Graison Gill knows a thing or two about bread. The former owner of a popular New Orleans bakery was a finalist for the James Beard Outstanding Baker Award in 2020; at that time Gill was making about 10,000 loaves of bread a week.



After making delicious breads and pastries for more than a decade, Gill decided he could make them even better if he had better ingredients, especially flour. He knew his bread was only as good as the flour that went into it, so he decided to start grinding his own.

After looking for an experienced wheat grower to partner with, he ultimately connected with Oklahoma State University farmer and agricultural entrepreneur Brady Sidwell. The two men decided to create a wheat mill in Oklahoma that would preserve the heritage of the state's wheat, celebrate Oklahoma's soil and produce good tasting, healthy flour.

In 2021, Gill and Sidwell created Chisholm Trail Milling inside the James W. Strate Center for Business Development at Autry Technology Center. The Enid tech center's business incubator program helps startup companies and individual entrepreneurs get resources and mentoring to help them get their businesses up and running.

Chisholm Trail Milling produces stone-milled flour from 100% local grain. The company works with wheat breeders and grain companies in Oklahoma to supply the flour and works directly with the Wheat Improvement Team of Oklahoma State University, the Oklahoma Wheat Commission and the Oklahoma Wheat Growers Association to develop a high-quality product.

The business mills all the flour to order, crushing it between two natural granite stones until it's extremely fine. The flour is then shipped throughout the United States.

In addition to operating at the technology center, Chisholm Trail Milling has expanded its partnership to include a bread-baking demonstration in collaboration with Autry Tech's culinary arts program. The company also hires former Autry Tech students and recently assisted in an event for Global Entrepreneurship Week.

Gill recently sold Bellegarde Bakery in New Orleans, and he has purchased a new bakery in London.



Graison Gill speaks with culinary arts students during a bread-baking demonstration at Autry Technology Center in Enid.

»»» APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST FY25 »»»

Investing in Oklahoma's Workforce

FY24 General Appropriation \$160,206,568

▶ **Meet the statutory requirement of funding the flex benefit allowance for the technology centers (Title 70. Schools §70-26-104) \$1,500,000**

▶ **Workforce Training \$37,000,000**

Investment in meeting the increased need for a trained workforce. Our goal is to increase full-time program enrollments by 10,000 over the next five years.

» Health Careers Training \$10,500,000

- ✦ Impacting growth of 28 programs
- ✦ Impacting additions of 19 programs

» Construction Trades Training. \$8,100,000

- ✦ Impacting growth of 21 programs
- ✦ Impacting additions of 17 programs

» Manufacturing Occupational Training \$7,600,000

- ✦ Impacting growth of 21 programs
- ✦ Impacting additions of 16 programs

» Ten Additional Student Pathways. \$10,800,000

- ✦ Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
- ✦ Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications
- ✦ Business, Management and Administration
- ✦ Education and Training
- ✦ Energy
- ✦ Hospitality and Tourism
- ✦ Human Services
- ✦ Information Technology
- ✦ Public Safety
- ✦ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics



▶ Incarcerated Individual Workforce Training	\$750,000
» Increased transition services for inmates re-entering society . . .	\$300,000
» Construction Trades Training	\$450,000
▶ Empower Oklahoma by CareerTech	\$2,000,000
Through partnership with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Oklahoma CareerTech will expand training programs for low-income individuals to include those who receive SNAP benefits.	
▶ Career and Technology Expansion Program	\$500,000
One-time allocations available to technology centers for expansion of programs into areas of Oklahoma that are not currently served by a technology center.	
Total FY25 Appropriations Increase Requested	\$41,750,000
TOTAL FY25 Appropriations Request	\$201,956,568



»» CAREERTECH CHAMPIONS »»

Kenji Brown » CAREERTECH SKILLS CENTERS

When Kenji Brown told his employer he had an OSHA 30 credential, it was enough to get him a promotion and a pay raise. Now the Midwest City native says he is making more money than he's ever made.

Brown works at Cooks Venture Poultry as part of a work-release program at Northeast Oklahoma Community Corrections Center, and he credits Oklahoma CareerTech for helping him learn the skills he needed to get the job.

"My life felt like it had no purpose," he said. "I wanted to build a future with a career."

At the time, he was an orderly at NOCCC, cleaning the medical facility at the corrections center. He enrolled in CareerTech's transportation, distribution and logistics program at the Vinita Skills Center, and that decision was life changing. Now, in addition to certifications for TDL, forklift and OSHA 30, Brown is a certified logistics associate and logistics technician.

He is still finishing his sentence at NOCCC, but a facility van takes him to and from work. In addition to the skills and certifications that helped him land his current job, his work ethic and attitude helped him earn the title of Employee of the Month. CareerTech programs emphasize

soft skills such as communication, leadership, problem solving, time management and teamwork, and Brown absorbed it all.

"There aren't very many people who are willing to put so much effort into people," he said about the Skills Centers staff. "I like knowing my TDL instructor actually cares about me and my future and about me bettering myself."

Brown was recently promoted to forklift driver and also plans to get his commercial driver's license through CareerTech's CDL program. Brown hopes to someday own his own trucking company.



Brighton Snow » MID-AMERICA TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Brighton Snow has his own production company and manages social media networks for large businesses. His company creates marketing videos, promotional graphics and advertising imagery for his clients. Not bad for a small-town boy with one semester of college under his belt.

Snow grew up in Washington, a south-central Oklahoma town with just

over 600 people. He toured Mid-America Technology Center as an eighth grader, but he would have to wait more than two years before he could enroll.

He was so excited he could barely wait. Snow had a passion for multimedia, and when he discovered he could attend the tech center while he was in high school, he seized the opportunity.

"I certainly wouldn't be where I am today without CareerTech," he said.

The hands-on learning environment appealed to Snow, who said he loved being able to learn with industry-leading technology.

"In the multimedia industry, technology is always

improving and changing," he said. "Mid-America gave me the resources to learn film production, graphic design and social media marketing. I can confidently create marketing videos, promotional graphics and advertising imagery using the career skills I've learned."

Snow joined Oklahoma Business Professionals of America, serving as state president in 2021. He competed in BPA events with skills such as using Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator, operating a camera and editing video. He has won nearly a dozen awards, including the title of world champion in social media management two years in a row.

In addition to his technical skills, Snow said, he also gained confidence.

"My adviser, Paxton Cavin, had a huge impact on me," he said. "She always motivates me to be the best."

That confidence helped Snow become one of only three Oklahoma students selected as U.S. Presidential Scholars in 2022.

He said CareerTech taught him the value of hard work, honesty and dedication, attributes he no doubt implements as he simultaneously runs a business and continues his education. Snow is enrolled at Oklahoma State University and after college plans to start a marketing company designed to help local farmers explore new marketing platforms.

"Local farmers often don't know how to take advantage of social media," he said.

Sandra Jenkins » INDIAN CAPITAL TECHNOLOGY CENTER



Sandra Jenkins had no plans to pursue a career in cooking when she enrolled in the culinary arts program at Indian Capital Technology Center. In fact, Jenkins said, she wants to be a forensic psychologist — a far cry from running a restaurant or baking cakes.

But enrolling in the program was a strategic move for the Hilldale High School student, who plans to attend Tulsa Community College this summer.

“I didn’t plan to go into the food service industry, but with my new culinary skills, I will be able to pay my way through college,” she said.

Jenkins competed in the Oklahoma FCCLA state contest; FCCLA is the CareerTech student organization affiliated with family and consumer sciences education. She improved her cooking skills at Indian Capital, earning

her eFoodHandlers and ServSafe credentials.

Jenkins said she is now able to cook more food for herself and her family, as well as work at Domino’s Pizza and as a line cook at the Oklahoma Renaissance Fair.

“I have also learned to handle high-stress environments,” she said.

In addition to cooking skills, Jenkins learned to communicate better, and she said she used those communication skills to make new friends through the program.

The Indian Capital grad had this message for employers who might be considering hiring a CareerTech student.

“When we graduate, we already have experience from our courses,” she said, “and we will work hard to prove we deserve to be employed.”

“CareerTech students are hard workers, no matter what program we are in.”

Ashley and Tyler Watson » RED RIVER TECHNOLOGY CENTER/ FRANCIS TUTTLE TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Ashley Powers wanted to become a doctor, but she was homeschooled and didn’t have access to the hands-on educational experiences she needed for her career path. She enrolled at Red River Technology Center in Duncan, Oklahoma.

Ashley also joined HOSA, the CareerTech student organization associated with health careers education. That’s where she met Tyler Watson, then HOSA state president. Their paths hadn’t

crossed at school, because Tyler attended Francis Tuttle Technology Center. One day she reached out to Tyler for advice.

“She was looking at colleges and wanted to know more about the biology/pre-med program at the University of Oklahoma,” Tyler said. “We started talking, and the rest is history.”

Flash forward nearly a decade, and Ashley Powers is now Dr. Ashley Watson, a resident physician at Capital Region Medical Center in Jefferson City, Missouri. In 2024, she hopes to complete her residency and receive her board certification.

Today, Tyler is completing his medical residency in Missouri, alongside his wife. Like Ashley, he credits Oklahoma CareerTech for laying the groundwork for his medical career.

In 2013, Tyler was a Putnam City High School student. He said he enrolled in Francis Tuttle’s biosciences and medicine academy because he wanted a challenge. The



academy offered that challenge, as well as insight into potential career paths.

“I loved science and I knew I wanted to pursue more rigorous training than what my high school alone could offer,” Tyler said, “but I wasn’t yet committed to a specific career path.”

In their respective programs at separate tech centers, the two received invaluable technical skills as well as life skills.

“These skills have made my life

richer and have made transitions through seasons in my career go more smoothly,” she said.

Francis Tuttle helped Tyler become more adaptable, he said. An important life skill for a student and a doctor.

“Learning to adapt early to academic challenges and new situations has made life run more smoothly,” he said.

After graduating from their respective technology centers, the Watsons followed nearly identical higher education paths, eventually receiving their Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degrees from Oklahoma State University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine.

For Tyler and Ashley, CareerTech was a college-prep experience. But Tyler said for some of their fellow HOSA members, CareerTech was their primary vocational training.

“CareerTech directly and successfully prepared them for a career,” Tyler said. “For all of us, choosing CareerTech showed a dedication to improving skills necessary for a career.”

»»» FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR »»»

CareerTech building bridges in education



By definition, the word silo means to isolate. In education, a silo is a simple concept that keeps things compartmentalized.

By design, career and technical education exists to break down educational silos by building bridges and removing barriers between secondary schools, postsecondary schools and business and industry.

This is the tenet behind career and technical education, and it's why Oklahoma CareerTech has nearly half a million enrollments each year through a network of school districts, technology centers, skills centers and Adult Education and Family Literacy providers. What's more, most CareerTech programs offer connections between secondary and postsecondary courses.

In the business world, the silo mentality is described as a reluctance to share information or knowledge across different divisions within a company. Such attitudes reduce efficiency, lower morale, disrupt workflows and weaken the corporate culture. It's a byproduct of competition between senior managers that is passed on to their employees.

The same is true in education as administrators may choose to avoid sharing or collaborating with colleagues in different systems. Silos can pit district against district, school against school and department against department. As a result, resources are wasted, productivity declines and achievement wanes.

Giving all stakeholders a voice and asking students, colleagues and communities what resources and support they need to be successful is innate in CareerTech's mission to get students ready for a career and college. As a result, Oklahoma CareerTech has been able to reach more students by customizing training developed in tandem with Oklahoma businesses.

Oklahoma is regularly recognized by other states for having one of the best CareerTech systems in the nation. That's because we've built a reputation for being inclusive and breaking through silos that traditionally separate the academic subjects from the skills and knowledge provided by career and technical education.

In fiscal 2022, Oklahoma CareerTech programs had a 94% positive placement rate, which means nearly all CareerTech graduates found employment, entered the military or continued their education.

In addition, more than 98,000 Oklahoma students are learning important leadership skills as members of the seven CareerTech student organizations: Business Professionals of America; DECA; Family, Career and Community Leaders of America; FFA; HOSA; SkillsUSA; and Technology Student Association.

Also, Oklahoma CareerTech served more than 8,700 companies in fiscal 2023 through our business and industry training programs, increasing profitability through some form of CareerTech service or training. These programs are customized to fit the needs of Oklahoma businesses.

None of these milestones were achieved in a silo. They are the result of collaboration between CareerTech and the many education systems and industry groups in Oklahoma to develop training materials, curriculums and programs that translate immediately to Oklahoma's workforce needs.

As we move ahead in this era of college and career readiness, CareerTech's mission to provide Oklahomans skills to enter the workforce and make informed career choices has never been more relevant.

Breaking down the state's educational silos begins with a vision, a vision similar to the one Oklahoma CareerTech adopted in 1968, when it became an independent agency under then State Director Francis Tuttle. Through collaboration and partnerships, Oklahoma CareerTech has been charting new paths for other states to follow ever since.

If you would like to learn more about Oklahoma CareerTech, visit our website at oklahoma.gov/careertech.



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





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»» POWERING OKLAHOMA'S ECONOMY »»



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