

Legislative Priorities
Reauthorization of Career and Technical Education Legislation

The National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE) is comprised of approximately 50 organizations dedicated to improving educational opportunities for women and girls. NCWGE's Task Force on Vocational Education and Training has advocated for more than 30 years for policies and programs to advance the technical skills and career opportunities of women and girls so that they can attain employment that enables them to achieve long-term economic independence.

NCWGE promotes all of the pathways that lead to high wage/high skill jobs for women and girls from diverse racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, age and disability backgrounds, including training for nontraditional jobs. Participation and achievement in career and technical education must not be limited by gender segregation, harassment or barriers that prevent girls and women, including single mothers, displaced homemakers and former welfare recipients, from becoming self-sufficient.

It is the goal of NCWGE that the career and technical education legislation provide programs, policies and resources for women and girls to have access to education and training for high wage/high skill and nontraditional jobs. Our priorities for the reauthorization of the career and technical education legislation are as follows:

Programs and services must be made available to women and girls through career and technical programs that will enable them to achieve high wage/high skill and nontraditional employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency.

- Funding must be provided to develop and support programs at the secondary and post-secondary levels that promote the exploration, enrollment, and retention in education and training that leads to nontraditional and other high skill/high wage employment in order to enable female students with a full range of options that lead to economic self-sufficiency. Specifically, at the secondary level, career and technical programs must provide services and programs to women and girls that facilitate and promote their transition to a full range of post-secondary options, such as Tech Prep Education programs, apprenticeships, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, or other post-secondary degree programs that lead to high wage/high skill and non-traditional careers.
- Preparatory services such as counseling, assessment, life skills development, career exploration, transferable skill identification, and the self-sufficiency measurement must be made available for women and girls from diverse backgrounds including, teen parents, reentrants to the workforce, displaced homemakers, low wage or part-time workers, and welfare recipients, in order to better prepare them for entry into high wage/high skill and nontraditional careers and technical education programs.

- Support services must include training-related services such as dependent care, transportation assistance, counseling tuition, assistance and other services that allow individuals, especially at the post-secondary level, to successfully complete training programs.
- Women and girls in secondary career and technical education programs must have access to technology courses and the same rigorous academic curriculum, including higher level academic courses, as all students.

Career Guidance and Counseling must be provided to all students and delivered in an extensive and fair manner that ensures students are receiving the most valuable information that will lead to high skill/high wage and nontraditional careers.

- Career guidance and counseling must be designed and utilize strategies to expose all students with full and complete information regarding career options that lead to high skill/high wage and non-traditional careers that lead to economic self-sufficiency, and provide programs that help break down gender stereotypes.
- National and state occupational and employment information systems must provide professional development, career information and materials that support non-traditional career awareness, recruitment and retention for use by students, parents, teachers, counselors and administrators.

Professional development must be provided to personnel in preparing students for their educational and career choices.

- Personnel charged with preparing students for their educational and career choices (counselors, teachers, administrators) must receive ongoing training to ensure that female students exploring career and technical education are provided comprehensive and unbiased information about their full range of options, including training counselors to not unfairly track women into “female dominated occupations,” training teachers and administrators to create classrooms free of harassment and stereotypical behavior, and training teachers and counselors in strategies for working with students pursuing nontraditional and employment and special populations.

National activities must support research on the outcomes of women and girls in career and technical education.

- National Research activities, including those conducted by the National Assessment of Vocational Education, must include research on: (1) the participation and outcomes of women and girls in career and technical education; (2) barriers faced by female students in career and technical education programs and practices that address those barriers; (3) effective practices in recruiting and retaining female students in non-traditional careers; and (4) progress that states are making in eliminating sex bias and stereotyping in career and technical education.

Accountability and disaggregated student data collection must be the cornerstone for planning and funding decisions at both the state and local level.

- Local education agencies must be held accountable for the same rigorous performance standards the states are held to including improving the participation and completion of women and girls in high skill/high wage career and technical education programs and placement in nontraditional occupations and other high wage/high skill careers leading to economic self-sufficiency.
- States must develop systems that report and disaggregate student information based on demographics (i.e. gender, race, age, disability and special population) and participation in career and technical education programs by specific program area (i.e. career cluster, program and course by CIP code).
- States and locals must be held accountable for improving the successful outcomes of women and girls in career and technical education programs, including those that are high skill/high wage and nontraditional.
- Performance measures must be implemented to measure the success of post-secondary students who complete career and technical education courses for the purpose of upgrading their skills and increasing employability.

Coordination efforts must be made between federal agencies and the legislation they monitor, while maintaining the integrity of each of the bills, their funding streams and the responsible agencies, that will best meet the needs of women and girls seeking career and technical education opportunities.

- The Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education should coordinate with other Federal agencies to ensure that programs such as career and technical education, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) promote a shared goal of preparing women and girls for employment in high wage/high skill and non-traditional careers.
- The Office of Vocational and Adult Education must work with other offices with the Department of Education, such as the Office for Civil Rights, to identify and remedy barriers to gender equity in career and technical education programs.