The Rigorous CTE Programs of Study (RPOS) improves state and local development and implementation of rigorous programs of study. Below is a sample of how states and locals might structure communication for delivery. Various adaptations could be made to fit state and local needs or existing structures. In addition, there are sample roles and responsibilities listed for inclusion on a Memo of Understanding (MOU) for partnership development.

State Structure

State RPOS (program of study, career pathways) Steering Committee: A state steering committee should be formed. Initially, this steering committee will be composed of Department of Education and State-level Community College staff as the initial work will revolve around secondary-to-postsecondary transitions. However, this state-level steering committee should look for ways to expand to include other state-level essential agencies as the work in RPOS/career pathways expands (i.e., adult RPOS/career pathways, etc.).

Roles & Responsibilities of State-wide Education & Careers Partnership Steering Committee

- Define the need for RPOS/career pathways partnerships.
- Nurture relationships with and include appropriate educational agencies, social agencies, and workforce and economic development initiatives to build a system that connects education with economic development and promotes a seamless system of lifelong learning opportunities.
- Integrate with other education reforms and economic development initiatives.
- Establish a statewide governance structure.
• Establish statewide policies to support the partnership and system building.
• Invest in foundational infrastructure and leverage existing resources.
• Develop and articulate the state vision for RPOS/career pathways.
• Target industries that serve state and regional economic development goals.
• Define the essential elements and outcomes of a RPOS/career pathways system.
• Build on existing quality career and technical education programs.
• Establish systems for performance measures to be collected and analyzed.
• Collect, analyze, and distribute regional labor market information.
• Develop a yearly collaborative strategic plan that includes collaboration among secondary school systems, postsecondary institutions, and business/industry/community-based partners.

Specific RPOS/Career Pathways Committees: As the state targets specific industries (i.e., Governor’s Strategic Industries) it may be necessary for a committee to be formed to work on that particular pathway and report findings to the State RPOS Steering Committee. These specific RPOS/career pathways committees will be predominantly composed of representatives from business and industry, Department of Education, higher education (community colleges), and other agencies as deemed necessary. These committees are a vehicle for the State RPOS Steering Committee to “talk to the customer” and learn what is happening in a specific cluster or industry as it relates to education and training needs.

Roles and Responsibilities of (state-level) Specific RPOS Committees:
• Identify industry/career areas that involve high skills, high demand, and high wages.
• Target industries that serve state and regional economic development goals.
• Identify the standards in targeted occupations (academic, technical, and employability skills).
• Identify exit points on targeted occupational career ladders (credentials, certifications, and degrees).
• Identify industry trends.

Local/Regional Structure

A RPOS/career pathways system will require a deepening of existing secondary and postsecondary educational partnerships and an expansion into new partnerships with other economic development, workforce development, and social agencies. Representing this new partnership should be an advisory body that has representation from all stakeholders. The decision on designation of a 501(c) (3) status should be left to the discretion of the partners.

As with the state-level steering committee, the local structure will begin with an emphasis on secondary and postsecondary educational partners. However, like the state structure, this council will expand to include other entities as it becomes more established and the work expands. The partnership should have a “holistic approach” as it shares objectives with other reform education and workforce initiatives. As the career pathway initiative evolves at the local level, the partnership should accommodate both youth and adult workers. The partnership can provide the framework for bringing all stakeholders to the table.

Composition: Representatives on the initial development of the local RPOS Council should include secondary and postsecondary institutions, economic development agencies, workforce development agencies, and local employers. Locales may differ in flavor, and the committee will need to include other initiatives that are working toward common goals.

As the partnership matures, it will expand its mission to include developing RPOS/career pathways for adults reentering the workplace and adults who need retooled skills. The composition of the partnership may expand to include the necessary representatives from business, education, and social agencies.
Formal Structure: The Local RPOS Partnership should be composed of representatives from secondary school systems, postsecondary institutions, local employers, economic development organizations, and other community-based organizations. This council will include leadership representatives from secondary school systems and postsecondary institutions that provide Perkins funding to support the partnership, along with other leadership representatives from public colleges and universities, special purpose schools, state-registered apprenticeships, businesses and industries, community-based economic development agencies, and other community-based organizations. Fifty percent (50%) of the total council membership should be composed of “other leadership representatives” to reflect inclusion of all community partner categories. The partnership council should appoint an internal executive committee, which has at least one representative from each of three areas: secondary education, postsecondary education, and business/industry. A chairperson will be designated from the executive committee. In addition, the partnership council could appoint an RPOS Manager who could coordinate the activities for the council. The partnership should adopt by-laws that will give the council a formal operating and structural framework. This framework should be flexible enough to allow expansion as the mission of the partnership expands from secondary-to-postsecondary connections to include adult retraining and social agencies as needed. In addition, the partnership should participate in professional development activities for designated representatives of the partnership (i.e., executive committee) in support of the state structure. The RPOS Partnership Council will be responsible for overseeing the partnership activities.

Role of Local RPOS Partnership Council: The local RPOS partnership council will be the advisory body for implementation of the comprehensive RPOS/career pathways system at the local level. This partnership council is responsible for providing direction and ensuring accountability for the partnership and will have a annual partnership meetings with recorded minutes.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Local RPOS Partnership Council:

- Form a partnership with representation of all stakeholders (secondary, postsecondary, and business/industry).
- Appoint and oversee activities of the executive committee.
- Develop a mission statement from the state’s vision.
- Develop by-laws and/or rules of operating for a formal operating structure.
- Connect existing education reforms and economic development strategies for a system approach.
- Identify other organizations and/or people to be involved.
- Nurture a collaborative development and implementation process for RPOS/career pathways.
- Describe desired system elements and outcomes.
- Nurture local school and college site teams to implement RPOS/career pathways elements at the local district or building level.
- Nurture local interest and understanding of RPOS/career pathways.
- Identify strategic priorities and industries for yearly focus.
- Develop a work plan or implementation plan with timelines.
- Develop assessment systems.
- Define administration and finance issues.
- Leverage finances and discuss ways for RPOS/career pathways to be an integral part of the education and training system, rather than an isolated, vulnerable “add-on.”
- Evaluate partnership effectiveness.
- Approve budget and financial activities of partnership.
- Establish priorities on short-term and long-term activities of partnership.
- Facilitate effective communication among all partners.
- Provide direction on conducting needs assessment in partnership service area as appropriate.
- Develop a log of meeting minutes.
- Participate in state-sponsored training and/or workshops for designated representatives of the partnership.

Executive Committee: An executive committee should be formed with a minimum of one representative from each group (secondary education, postsecondary education, and business/industry representative) who can provide the leadership for the partnership council. The Executive Committee should meet as necessary (a monthly meeting is suggested).

Roles and Responsibilities of the Executive Committee:
Commit personal time and energy.
Meet on a regular basis *(a monthly meeting is suggested)* to provide leadership for the council.
Communicate the importance of RPOS/career pathways.
Commit to systematic planning and implementation.
Participate in state-sponsored training.
Coach and support the manager for the career and education partnership.
Recruit key people/groups for council membership.
Create a coherent RPOS/career pathways system.
Make decisions about plans and future directions.
Organize council meetings on a regular and timely basis.
Create necessary committees for specific tasks.
Facilitate communication among partnership council members.
Submit grant application for funding in collaboration with the fiscal agent.
Participate in state-sponsored training and/or workshops for executive committee representatives of the partnership.
Designate a chairperson for the partnership.

**Chairperson:** The Executive Committee will appoint a chairperson to organize and coordinate council meetings. The chairperson will create and maintain a cohesive, effective group and create an environment that is conducive to positive partnership action.

**Roles and Responsibilities of the Chairperson:**
- Develop items for the meeting agenda and assist handle details regarding meetings.
- Lead meetings.
- Keep the partnership focused and on task.
- Delegate tasks and follow-up work.
- Participate in state-sponsored training.

**RPOS Local Partnership Manager:** The Partnership could designate a RPOS manager to coordinate the activities of the partnership.

**Roles and Responsibilities of the RPOS Manager:**
- Possess vision for the future of education and be able to share it.
- Contribute ideas.
- Be a liaison to the State RPOS Partnership Committee for the local partnership council.
- Serve as a liaison to all stakeholders in the local partnership council.
- Educate others about RPOS/career pathways planning and implementation.
- Align the local partnership council’s goals with the State RPOS Partnership Committee objectives.
- Organize and coordinate council meetings with the chairperson.
- Help organize and guide committees.
- Coordinate partnership communication and activities.
- Link people with information and resources.
- Communicate activities, plans, and results to appropriate stakeholders.
- Solicit input from all stakeholders for the partnership’s annual strategic plan.
- Coordinate the implementation and reporting of the partnership’s strategic plan.
- Be a key contact person and communicate on a regular basis with the local school or college site teams *(i.e., monthly)*.
- Provide technical assistance to the local school or college site teams.
- Assist the local partnership council in securing funding through grant writing.
- Attend state training and seek other training when appropriate.
- Provide assistance and leadership to the local partnership council in the RPOS/career pathways arena including: pathway development; postsecondary credit opportunities; articulation; curriculum development; career development; professional development; community outreach, assessments, and evaluation; and state requirements in reporting and funding.
- Collaborate with State agencies in program and curriculum planning and alignment.
- Conduct needs assessments and evaluations for the local partnership’s plan and provide leadership in the use of data collected.
MOU or By-Laws (Operational Procedures) Formation: Each council should develop a formal document describing the rules for operation or a Memo of Understanding (MOU) that outlines roles and responsibilities. The following needs to be established:

- Name of partnership
- Mission
- Organization and governance
- Membership of Council: Election and vacancies; Time and date; Attendance; Roles & Responsibilities
- Executive Committee: Designation and vacancies; Term and time of election; Duties
- Chairperson: Designation and vacancies; Term and time of election; Duties
- Local RPOS Partnership Manager: Duties
- Elections: Terms and time
- Meetings: Annual meetings; Regular meetings; Special meetings; Notice of meetings; Quorum
- Task Committees
- Accountability
- Dissolution & Amendments

Connection to Local Secondary and Postsecondary Sites: Each school/school district and college should form a team to implement and support RPOS/career pathways. School/college site teams should consist of representatives from administration, career and technical education, academics, and career guidance/counselors. Existing teams (i.e., school improvement team, strategic planning team, CTE advisory committee, curriculum development team) can be used where applicable. This decision should be left to local discretion.

Roles & Responsibilities for Local Secondary or Postsecondary School Site Team:

- Gain commitment from top administration for a system approach.
- Ensure that the team has representatives from the following: counselors; administrators; academic representatives; CTE instructors; and curriculum developers. Existing teams may be used (curriculum teams, school improvement, advisory, etc.).
- Appoint a key contact person for connection to the local partnership.
- Communicate regularly (i.e., monthly) with the manager from the partnership council.
- Integrate and build upon existing programs with RPOS/career pathways being an umbrella system.
- Identify and present targeted RPOS/career pathways for council approval.
- Identify specific curriculum revision and development needs for council input.
- Present work plan to the partnership council.
- Provide opportunities for participation to all students.
- Identify strategies for implementation of all RPOS/career pathways elements.
- Send representatives to local council and/or state training when appropriate.

Connection to existing committees (local business advisory committees, other local business entities): In addition to business representation on the partnership council, the structure should allow for collaboration and connection to any existing business and education partnership such as local secondary and/or postsecondary career and technical education program advisory committees. The structure should allow for some type of inclusion or reporting mechanism so that no stakeholder group is operating in a silo.