

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, January 12, 2023

Office of Career and Technical Education Opens Applications for Education Readiness Grants

Grants help high schools expand access to advanced manufacturing, information technology CTE programs

(INDIANAPOLIS) - The Indiana Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE), in partnership with [Conexus Indiana](#) and [TechPoint](#), has opened applications for Education Readiness Grants, which provide funding for selected schools to implement high school CTE programs in high-demand career fields, specifically advanced manufacturing and information technology. The grant aims to strengthen partnerships between industry and local schools, while increasing student access to opportunities in these career fields.

Schools seeking to implement or expand select programs of study in advanced manufacturing and information technology are eligible to apply. Applications are [available here](#) and open through February 15.

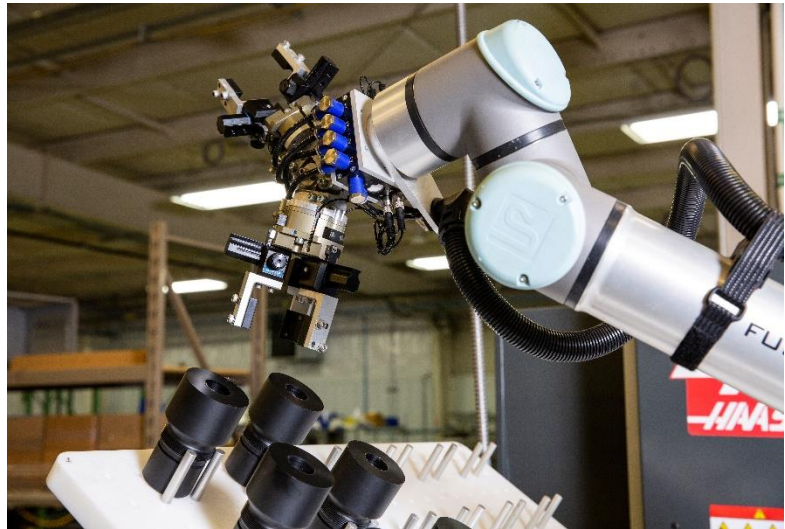
Grant recipients must demonstrate a direct connection with local employers in advanced manufacturing or information technology with the goal of recruiting more students to CTE and graduating job-ready students with experience and credentials needed by local employers. Schools using Education Readiness Grants must partner with a local employer to provide students with a work-based learning experience that directly complements the CTE pathways coursework.

“Education Readiness Grants are a targeted effort to better align local CTE programs in advanced manufacturing and information technology with the talent needs of area employers,” said Tony Harl, State Director of Career and Technical Education. “By providing schools the resources necessary to acquire and offer instructional equipment and technology up to the latest industry standards, students can develop skills that will transition seamlessly into high-wage, high-demand careers.”

This is the second year of the grant program, which was originally designed with Conexus Indiana to help recipients prepare students for careers in the increasingly high-tech advanced manufacturing industry. TechPoint has joined as a partner this year, as the program is expanded to the information technology sector.

The two eligible programs of study within advanced manufacturing remain Industry 4.0 - Smart Manufacturing and Industrial Automation and Robotics. While schools offering CTE programs of study in Cybersecurity or Software Development in information technology are also eligible for the grant. These four programs of study are all part of Indiana’s recent redesign of secondary CTE programs, [Next Level Programs of Study](#), that launched this school year.

The Education Readiness Grants program was designed as a student-focused complement to the employer-targeted [Manufacturing Readiness Grants](#) program. This program was launched in mid-2020 and is administered by the Indiana Economic Development Corporation in partnership with Conexus Indiana. According to a recent [impact report](#), 212 awards have been made totaling more than \$17.4 million in Manufacturing Readiness Grants with more awards soon to be announced. These grants are supporting a projected \$139 million in capital investment in Industry 4.0



A cobot used by Portage, Indiana manufacturer, Konrady Plastics.
Photo credit to Conexus Indiana

technologies, which connect physical production with smart technologies such as machine learning, additive manufacturing and artificial intelligence. Governor Holcomb has proposed the state double its investment in Manufacturing Readiness Grants in his current budget proposal.

The Governor's Workforce Cabinet recently [issued recommendations](#) to tackle employer talent challenges which included a strong focus on digital development, and led to the inclusion of information technology CTE programs in this year's Education Readiness Grants. TechPoint is a leader in this sector and recently launched its [41K initiative](#) dedicated to growing Indiana's tech workforce by 41,000 by 2030.

Grant applications will be reviewed by Conexus Indiana and TechPoint advisory committees, which will make funding recommendations for the Office of Career and Technical Education's consideration. The committees comprise of postsecondary, industry and state leadership partners who represent various industry sectors, technology competencies and geographic diversity. Information on last year's award winners can be [found here](#).

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About the Office of Career and Technical Education: Operating under the Governor's Workforce Cabinet, the Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) serves as an integral part of Indiana's talent development system. The OCTE helps to connect industry, workforce development, and education through the development and implementation of rigorous and relevant career and technical education (CTE) programs of study that prepare students for a wide range of high-wage, high-skill, and in-demand careers. Students in Indiana's CTE programs will gain the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for success in postsecondary education and economically viable career opportunities.

About Conexus Indiana: For more than a decade, Conexus Indiana, one of the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership (CICP) nonprofit initiatives, has been positioning the Hoosier State as the best place for advanced manufacturing and logistics industries to innovate, invest, employ and succeed. By collaborating with industry, academic and public sector partners on a shared vision for an innovative, skilled workforce and stronger business climate, Conexus Indiana has helped to create opportunities for advanced manufacturing and logistics companies, prepare Hoosiers to succeed in the state's largest industry sectors and maintain Indiana's competitive advantage. For more information, go to www.conexusindiana.com.

About TechPoint: TechPoint is the nonprofit, industry-led growth initiative for Indiana's technology companies and overall tech ecosystem. The team is focused on attracting talent, accelerating scale-up companies, activating the community and amplifying stories of success. For more information, please visit www.techpoint.org.