



Career Technical Education Month



February has been designated [Career Technical Education \(CTE\) Month](#) by the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) to highlight the vital role of CTE in preparing students for high-demand careers. According to the Department of Education, West Virginia offers 65 programs across 16 career clusters such as health sciences, advanced manufacturing, and IT. To celebrate, WVDE will host a CTE Day at the Legislature on February 20, showcasing student projects and skills at the State Capitol.

"Career Technical Education is producing real results for West Virginia's economy," said State Superintendent of Schools Michele L. Blatt. "Our students are gaining workplace experience, earning wages and developing skills that employers look for, before they even graduate high school."

According to a WVDE press release, CTE programs are making a measurable impact for West Virginia students and the state's economy. During the 2024-2025 school year:

- More than 91,000 students in grades 6-12 completed a CTE course
- Approximately 11,530 students participated in work-based learning opportunities
- Students completed more than one million hours of work-based learning experience

If you or someone you know is a CTE student, the Jumpstart Savings Program is available to help individuals save for career expenses. Learn more about the program below.

[Learn More](#)

National Jumpstart Savings Act Introduced

U.S. Congressman and former West Virginia State Treasurer Riley M. Moore (R-WV) has introduced the [Jumpstart Savings Act](#), a federal initiative that builds on the success of West Virginia's state tax-advantaged Jumpstart Savings Program.

The legislation would empower other states to administer tax-advantaged savings accounts to help Americans afford the upfront costs of careers in skilled trades, apprenticeships, and technical professions. The legislation would also allow West Virginia Jumpstart Savings Program participants to qualify for certain federal tax benefits.

Supported by bipartisan co-sponsors and major industry groups, the legislation aims to strengthen America's workforce, expand career pathways beyond four-year degrees, and revitalize the nation's manufacturing base.



Jumpstart Savings at the State Capitol



Representatives from the **Jumpstart Savings Program** joined leaders, advocates, and community members gathered at the West Virginia State Capitol on Jan. 20 to celebrate a Day of Hope, a statewide initiative promoting recovery, resilience, and support for individuals impacted by substance use. During the event, a formal proclamation was issued declaring Jan. 20 as the Day of Hope in West Virginia. The goal is to reaffirm the state's commitment to fostering awareness, reducing stigma, and encouraging pathways to recovery.

The Jumpstart Savings Program attended the event to show support for workforce development and financial empowerment in West Virginia.

Why Trades Matter in West Virginia

According to the West Virginia Building and Construction Trades Council (WVBCT), a [recent report from Marshall University Center for Business and Economic Research](#)

(CBER) highlights the contributions of WVBCT. The study shows that WVBCT generated an estimated \$8.1 billion in economic activity in 2022-2023.

According to Justin Williams, Director of the Affiliated Construction Trades and member of Jumpstart Saving's governing board, the findings reaffirm what industry leaders have long known: skilled tradespeople aren't just building infrastructure, they're building West Virginia's economy.

"When you invest in skilled trades, you invest in West Virginia's future," Williams said. "This report confirms that our members do more than show up at a job site. We create real economic impact, support local businesses, and ensure every dollar earned is reinvested in our communities."

The report found that WVBCT members worked an average of 17.4 million hours annually, with wages and benefits contributing \$2 billion in total labor income.

Trade Highlight: Culinary Arts



Chefs and head cooks oversee daily food preparation in restaurants, hotels, and other food service establishments, often working long, fast-paced hours including weekends and holidays. Most enter the field with a high school diploma and extensive experience, though some pursue formal culinary education or apprenticeships. In 2024, the median annual pay was \$60,990 (\$29.32 per hour), and employment is projected to grow 7% from 2024 to 2034, much faster than average, adding

about 14,000 jobs. With approximately 24,400 openings annually, this career offers strong prospects for those passionate about culinary arts and leadership.

Upcoming Events

- 2/13 - Boone County Career & Technical Center (Foster)
- 2/20 - CTE (Career Technical Education) Day (State Capitol, Charleston)
- 2/25 - Department of Revenue Benefit Fair (Charleston)
- 2/26 - WV School Counselor Association Annual Conference (Morgantown)
- 3/3-3/4 - 2026 Hospitality Cup-West Virginia ProStart Invitational (Charleston)
- 3/5 - MAMC - Marshall Machinist-CNC at BridgeValley (South Charleston)
- 3/25-3/26 - West Virginia Construction and Design Expo (Charleston)
- 4/8 - Eastern's Spring 2026 College Fair (Moorefield)
- 4/29 - WV Gear Up (Charleston)

Does your organization or group need more information about the Jumpstart Savings Program?

Staff members are available for events, speaking engagements and conferences. If you or your organization would like to schedule an in-person or webinar speaker please email wvjumpstart@wvsto.gov or call 304-340-5055.



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