

Career Clusters

What Energy Companies Need to Know

**What are Career Clusters?**

As defined by *Advance CTE: State Leaders Connecting Learning to Work*, Career Clusters are groupings of occupations/career specialties used as an organizing tool for curriculum design and instruction. Occupations/career specialties are grouped into the Career Clusters based on the fact that they require a set of common knowledge and skills for career success. The knowledge and skills represented by Career Clusters prepare learners for a full range of occupations/career specialties, focusing on the holistic, polished blend of technical, academic and employability skills. This approach enhances the more traditional approach to career and technical education in which instruction may focus on one or two occupations and emphasize only specific occupational skills.

**How are they used in schools?**

To prepare today's students for tomorrow, schools are working to help students achieve in challenging subjects. One key approach to this goal is to provide students with relevant contexts for learning. Career Clusters link what students learn in school with the knowledge and skills they need for success in college and careers. Career Clusters identify pathways from secondary school to two- and four-year colleges, graduate school, and the workplace, so students can learn in school and what they can do in the future. This connection to future goals motivates students to work harder and enroll in more rigorous courses. (From Advance CTE)

**Why does my company need to know about Career Clusters?**

Understanding the Career Clusters is key to creating and attracting a diverse, qualified pool of talent since today’s middle and high school students are tomorrow’s workers. Building partnerships with local schools around Career Clusters not only builds awareness of how energy careers fit within this system, but it gives industry an opportunity to provide input into curriculum and provide context to what students are learning.

**How do we begin to connect with schools about Career Clusters?**

The Center for Energy Workforce Development has developed a toolkit to help the energy industry better understand Career Clusters and encourage involvement with local schools in their Career Cluster initiatives. This includes a PowerPoint presentation that can be used in an initial meeting with a school to demonstrate where energy careers fall within the sixteen career clusters. A visual representation is on the *Energy Jobs Career Cluster Map* where Architecture & Construction; Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources; Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM); and Manufacturing are featured.