The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, also known as Perkins V, required that states submit a plan to administer the grant covering the years 2020-2024. In accordance with Section 122(c)(2) of the new legislation, the New York State Plan, including proposed performance targets, was developed in consultation with the stakeholders. Performance indicators drive the use of funds inasmuch as they identify areas on which state and local recipients must focus their efforts and funding decisions. Targets are set by the state based on available data and recent performance levels and challenge subrecipients to improve outcomes for all students.

The law, however, provides an opportunity to request a revision of the targets based on unanticipated circumstances or changes related to improvements in data or measurement approaches. Section 113 gives states the option to request a revision the levels of performance in a submission of the state plan amendments (due in May 2021).

Accordingly, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) proposes to request a revision to the performance targets in two of the secondary performance indicators based on unanticipated circumstances and improvements in data approaches. NYSED is requesting an adjustment of the following two indicators as defined in the plan:

has fallen from a high of 15.3% in April 2020 to 8.2% in December 2020², recovery to prepandemic levels of employment is not expected until 2023.³

In January 2021, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and the New York State Department of analysis point to a drop in in nonfarm payroll levels for the first time since April 2020. The unemployment rate for individuals with a high school diploma aged 18-19 in January 2021 was 16.6%⁴ Given these conditions, it is likely that employment placements of CTE program concentrators will drop significantly.

It is expected that placement in post-secondary education and training will also be adversely

community colleges for re-skilling, the COVID-19 recession appears to be having the opposite effect. Enrollments in postsecondary programs at the two-year colleges in New York has declined by approximately 10%⁵ and disruptions caused by closings are not easily overcome in CTE programs which are often lab based and not duplicated by on-line instructional solutions. The enrollment of first year students enrolled in public two-year colleges dropped 18.9%

At the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, NYSED became aware of a misapplication of data definitions for the 3S1-Post-program placement indicator. Districts responsible for reporting more than two-thirds

reporting on student plans after graduation, not an actual survey of program leavers six months after exiting. Once these concerns were identified, a plan was put in place to correct this reporting deficiency. The corrective action will be to survey program leavers and report outcomes of those responding to the survey. Staying on course has been made difficult during a year with limited staff capacity and restricted funding as a result of the COVID-19.

As a result of the convergence of unanticipated circumstances and changes in data reporting, NYSED expects the Post-Program Placement indicator outcomes to be significantly lower than in past years.

The number of students able to participate in 54 hours of work-based learning has decreased

There is growing evidence that the pandemic has impacted students and families in ways that influence enrollment, retention, completion, placement, and non-traditional participation at the postsecondary level.

According to a report produced by the independent, non-profit organization United Hospital

⁷ The report demonstrates the severity of emotional and

financial distress that

Prior to the pandemic, higher education across the nation, and particularly at community colleges, experienced decreased student enrollment for consecutive years. Since the pandemic, research indicates "sharp declines at public two-year institutions (21% decrease)" and shows enrollment "falling at a rate almost 20 times higher than the prior year's decline."⁸

Between 2018 and 2020, New York State experienced a decrease in enrollment of approximately 14% of students in participating Perkins grant recipient institutions. It is likely that the pandemic will exacerbate this trend. Additionally, because of the amount of international and national travel to and through New York, the pandemic has hit New York State particularly hard. In fact, New York State ranks among the states with the most deaths (43,942 as of January 2021).⁹ Further, according to the November 2020 Congressional Research Services, New York State was among the five states with the highest unemployment rates.¹⁰

Beyond the new financial limitations many New York State families are experiencing as a result of COVID-19, several other factors may lead to declining postsecondary enrollment numbers. The National Conference of State Legislatures confirms how remote and hybrid learning on a national level have adversely impacted enrollment. They report that freshman enrollment in fall 2020 declined by an unprecedented 13.1% This led to an overall postsecondary enrollment dip of 2.5% according to the most recent data from the National Student Clearinghouse.¹¹ Enrollment declines vary by institution, but public 2-year institutions have generally seen the largest declines in first-time student enrollment (-21.0%) followed by public colleges and universities (-8.1%).¹² Preliminary data from various institutions align with the findings that overall enrollment has notably decreased since the onset of the pandemic.

The pandemic is also expected to harm retention and completion rates. Preliminary data comparing Fall 2019 with Fall 2020 has shown a decrease in student retention and Pell--

from these gr also negatively impact grades and retention rates.¹³

Qualitative information gathered from grants officers and practitioners indicates that the change from in-person to largely virtual courses has resulted in manrom in

massive increase in unemployment from December 2019 (774,274) to August 2020 (1,186,672). While the employment rates have somewhat improved since then, as of December 2020 the unemployment rate (744,274) was still more than double what it was in December 2019 (371,454).¹⁷ These statistics surrounding employment and placement opportunities depict an austere environment now and project future uncertainty in CTE fields.

The Non-traditional Program Enrollment indicator (3P1) measures students in CTE programs leading to non-traditional fields by gender as a percentage of the overall CTE student population. Preliminary data from recipient institutions show that some programs may be more susceptible to fluctuations in nontraditional enrollment. A key demographic within this group of students is women concentrating in traditionally male-dominated CTE fields. A New York Times article shows that the arrival of COVID-19 and the subsequent economic downturn have had a

childcare availability, and mental health. Nation-wide, approximately 865,000 women have dropped out of the labor force since the onset of the pandemic a rate four-times that of men.¹⁸ Also, 32% of women ages 25-44 said the need to care for their children was the reason for their unemployment. With the loss of childcare, for many families the only option was for females who were gainfully employed to reduce their hours or quit their jobs. A Washington

the pandemic said it was because of a lack of childcare

19

When schools in New York State closed in March of 2020, many women became not only their children's primary caregivers but also their primary educators. The added responsibility of caring for their children around the clock and either teaching them or assisting them with virtual learning has left many women no choice but to decrease the amount of time they work.

The increased obligations many women now face, and the resulting decrease or elimination of employment and income, for some, will eliminate the option of attending community college. As women continue to disproportionately face the damage caused by the pandemic, it stands to reason that they will also disproportionately face obstacles to participate in nontraditional fields by gender at the postsecondary level. The number of women who pursue, persist and complete nontraditional programs by gender will therefore decrease at a higher rate than that of men, leading to a lower percentage of Non-Traditional Program Enrollment.

The data available from the inception of the pandemic to today, coupled with anecdotal information from grant officers, faculty, and students at New York State community colleges, show declines in enrollment, retention, completion, placement, and nontraditional

¹⁷ Local Area Unemployment Statistics-New York

Unemployment Statistics - New York.

¹⁸ Jessica Grose, <u>This Is A Primal Scream</u>

Coronavirus child-care crisis will set women back a generation