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Consideration to ESTABLISH FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES (FCS) AS AN INDEPENDENT CAREER CLUSTER

To Messrs. Katie Graham, Kate Kreamer, and Dan Hinderliter:

I am writing today to request the inclusion of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) as an independent career cluster within the National Career Clusters Framework.

FCS programs provide research-based knowledge and skills in the critical areas of personal finance, nutrition, human development, parenting, apparel and textiles, and housing and provide foundational career preparation, leading to employment and higher education in an even broader range of areas.

The CTE Without Limits[[1]](#footnote-1) work completed by Advance CTE highlights that CTE must, as it has

always done, continue to evolve to meet both the emerging and long-standing challenges our country faces. By including Family and Consumer Sciences as an independent career cluster, Advance CTE will be supporting states as they address employment gaps in a wide range of industries including culinary arts, hospitality, tourism, food science and nutrition, apparel and textile design and merchandising, health management and wellness, and others and ensuring that those learners will be equipped with the technical skills to be successful.

Unlike some of the other career pathways, the FCS career pathway already includes National Center for Educational Statistics Classification of Instruction (CIP) program codes and the School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED) coding that can be used by educational institutions. Additionally, the FCS career pathway includes multiple content specializations; meaning a graduate of an FCS program has many more career options than others may have.

Many industries are suffering from a skilled worker gap that can be addressed by implementation of an FCS career cluster. These include the well-known and documented teacher shortages[[2]](#footnote-2), milling and baker shortages[[3]](#footnote-3), and hospitality labor shortages[[4]](#footnote-4). In the baking field alone, the industry is expected to have approximately 53,000 unfilled jobs by 2030. A high school graduate of an FCS career pathway can immediately join the workforce and due to their FCS training, will have the necessary technical skills complemented with training in leadership, project management, time management, and organization to be successful. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics, many of the FCS careers are projected for growth; thus schools need to have the career pathways in place to address employer needs.

As highlighted in “Rationale for Establishing a Family and Consumer Sciences Career Cluster,”[[5]](#footnote-5) published by the Alliance for FCS, the Family and Consumer Sciences is a diverse and vital field that plays a crucial role in preparing students for real-world challenges across a variety of workplace settings.

In your publications, Advance CTE has stated that the framework will be developed based on a combination of national labor market data, engagement with CTE-connected professionals, national partner organizations, and industry representatives and will be organized based on North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and Standard Occupation Codes (SOC).

This raises concerns because this approach does not address historical discrimination which has prevented some careers from being properly captured in NAICS and SOC systems. Careers that have long been held by women were overlooked in career tracking systems and those oversights have never been corrected. As an example, NAICS only recognized textiles from manufacturing and food preparation is limited to the use of equipment.

The NAICS and SOC systems are not flexible; meaning they do not change to match the needs of society and therefore, are an inappropriate way to identify and group current and emerging career pathways. If Advance CTE is truly committed to supporting entrepreneurship among learners, allowing them to pursue the career of their choosing, Family and Consumer Sciences is the career cluster that builds the needed experience, knowledge, and skillset needed to allow learners to do this.

The time is now to take action to ensure the future success of tomorrow’s workforce and so, I ask that Advance CTE establish Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) as an independent Career Cluster.

Thank you for your review of the National Career Clusters Framework and your dedication to CTE without limits. We must be prepared to review, re-evaluate, and make the right decisions to support industries, including all that align with the FCS industry.

Warmly,

1. CTE Without Limits, Advance CTE, <https://careertech.org/without-limits> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. UMF Education faculty recognized by MainAEYC for contributions to the early childhood field; University of Main Farmington; March 2024; <https://www.umf.maine.edu/2024/03/umf-education-faculty-recognized-by-maineaeyc-for-contributions-to-the-early-childhood-field/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. What it will take to combat the baking industry’s labor shortage; Baking Business.com; Feb 2024; <https://www.bakingbusiness.com/articles/60988-what-it-will-take-to-combat-the-baking-industrys-labor-shortage> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. How the Hospitality Sector is Adapting to a Talent Shortage; Talroo; April 2022; <https://blog.talroo.com/how-hospitality-sector-is-adapting-to-talent-shortage/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Establishing a FCS Career Cluster, Alliance for FCS, <https://www.aafcs.org/allianceforfcs/initiatives/establishing-a-fcs-career-cluster> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)