

Money for Work Training Is There

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Career technical education has undergone a renaissance in California schools, shaking off the stigma of "vocational ed" and gaining an 18 percent increase in funding in the past two years.

But the tangle of different federal and state programs to fund career technical education, which trains students for careers in a wide range of fields, have sometimes prevented San Diego County schools from getting their fair share of state funding, a University of San Diego study found. (This problem isn't limited to career technical education: I wrote about [the troublesome complexity of preschool funding](#) earlier this year.)

While schools in San Diego County were snapping up federal Perkins grants and funding for equipment and supplies, they failed to get an equitable share of other state and federal funds, when compared to the number of teenagers and young adults in the county.

For instance, San Diego County schools have acquired funding for fewer California Partnership Academies, schools-within-a-school with a career focus, than smaller counties with lower teen populations, researchers said.

Educators surveyed by the University of San Diego said applying for the funding was difficult, and some applications were so cumbersome that they didn't even think about applying for them. Small and rural school districts were at a particular disadvantage in understanding what funding was available and having the resources to apply for it, the researchers found.

To help solve the problem, the University of San Diego researchers [created this user-friendly map](#) of career technical programs, who is eligible for them, and what is necessary to apply. Researcher Rich Seder, a former policy fellow for California's Office of the Secretary of Education, said putting together the map was an eye-opener on how complex and confusing the funding sources are.

"Little did I know ... it wasn't as easy as just going to the Internet and simple clicks to find the information," Seder said.

After about "500 clicks," he added, "I just started to make phone calls."

You can check out the full report [here](#), or view the map [at this site](#).

-- EMILY ALPERT