# **ADVANCE CTE EXCELLENCE IN ACTION AWARD**

**PROGRAM SUMMARY**

Advance CTE is pleased to announce a call for applications for the fifth annual Excellence in Action awards, through which we recognize and honor superior Career Technical Education (CTE) programs of study from across the nation.   
  
**CRITERIA FOR JUDGING**

Selected programs will exemplify excellence in:

* Implementing Career Cluster®-based [programs of study](https://careertech.org/programs-study);
* Maintaining effective employer and business partnerships;
* Demonstrating alignment to rigorous and relevant college- and career-ready expectations;
* Demonstrating a clear progression of knowledge and skills and student transitions across secondary and postsecondary systems;
* Integrating successful career guidance and advisement;
* Integrating high-quality work-based learning experiences;
* Highlighting alignment to workforce and employer needs in the community; and
* Providing concrete data on the program of study’s impact on student achievement and success at both the secondary and postsecondary levels.

**ELIGIBILITY**

* This award is open to any secondary or postsecondary schools or colleges in the United States. Your school or institution may submit one application per [Career Cluster](http://careertech.org/career-clusters);
* The program of study must have at least one full graduating class;
* Your program must be eligible to receive funding from the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act;
* Applications that do not include data to demonstrate positive impact on student achievement will not be eligible for consideration.
* If your program has received in an award in the past, you may not apply for that same Career Cluster. However, your school or institution may apply in a different Career Cluster.

**AWARD SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Complete applications will contain the following:

* A completed application including supplemental materials by the application deadline of **November 15, 2017 at 5 p.m. ET.**
* At least one letter of support from an employer or business partner supporting the program of study; and
* At least one additional letter of support from a partner (education, community or business) of your choosing.
* *Optional:* Supplemental materials including photos, videos, news articles, etc., are welcome but not required.

The application must be submitted using [this form](https://careertech.org/2018-excellence-action-application). The application must be submitted in a Microsoft Word format. Supplemental materials, including the letters of recommendation, must be combined and submitted as **one** PDF document.

*Please note:*

* Submissions should **not** include any personally identifiable student.
* The application does not have a page limit, however, many questions do have a word limit. Please do not submit responses that go beyond this limit. Also, submissions that do not contain all the required materials (a completed application, two letters of support and supplemental materials in the correct formats) will not be advanced for consideration.

**WINNERS WILL RECEIVE**

* A banner to hang in their school or institution;
* A digital banner to use in email and print materials as they so choose; and
* Travel and one hotel room for one night in Washington, DC for a representative to be recognized at an awards ceremony to be held the week of April 4-6, 2018.

**WINNERS WILL ALSO BE FEATURED IN**

* A national press release, which will be distributed to national media.
* A winner-specific press release to distribute to local media;
* A standalone one-pager;
* A standalone blog on the [Learning that Works blog](http://blog.careertech.org/);
* Representation on the Advance CTE [website](http://www.careertech.org).
* Many past winners have been featured in national conferences, in briefs and reports, on webinars and in the media.

**HOW TO APPLY**

* Fill out the following application.
* Once you have finished, complete [this form](https://careertech.org/2018-excellence-action-application) and upload the following:
* Your full application saved as a Word document (.docx)
* All of your supplemental documents or evidence consolidated as one PDF document.

# **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. Program of study name: **Agriculture Education**
2. Point of Contact  
    Name: Dave Gossman

Email Address: dgossman@muhsd.org

Phone Number: 209-357-6025 (office) 209-648-2616 (cell)  
Address: Atwater High School, c/o Agriculture Department, PO Box 835 / 2201 Fruitland Ave, Atwater CA 95301

1. Applicant’s School/College: Atwater High School
2. State: California
3. Type of institution (click the box to check)

Area technical center

Career academy

Comprehensive high school

Community college

Technical college

Other (please specify)

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| --- |
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1. Career Cluster in which your program of study should be considered (Follow this link for a further explanation of each Career Cluster [careertech.org/career-clusters](http://careertech.org/career-clusters)) **(Select only ONE):**

Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources Career Cluster

Architecture & Construction Career Cluster

Arts, A/V Technology & Communications Career Cluster

Business Management & Administration Career Cluster

Education & Training Career Cluster

Finance Career Cluster

Government & Public Administration Career Cluster

Health Sciences Career Cluster

Hospitality & Tourism Career Cluster

Human Services Career Cluster

Information Technology Career Cluster

Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security Career Cluster

Manufacturing Career Cluster

Marketing Career Cluster

Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Career Cluster

Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Career Cluster

1. In three sentences or less, describe your program of study, including the secondary and postsecondary components and how long the program of study has been in place.

The Atwater High School Agriculture Department committed towards promoting and implementing academic success, personal growth, premier leadership, and career exploration/direction of the 1038 (2017-2018) individual students enrolled in the school’s agriculture education program, in order to prepare them for college, trade school, military, and/or career readiness. Each of the individual students are enrolled in career technical education courses that specialize in one of 5 agricultural career cluster areas: Agricultural Business, Agriscience, Agriculture Mechanics, Animal Science, or Ornamental Horticulture. Students enrolled in our courses meet high school graduation requirements, college entrance requirements for the University of California College Systems, earn articulation credits at two local community colleges, and will begin (2018) earning various industry recognized certifications pertaining to various agricultural industry skills and career pathways.

1. Please check the geographical and demographic setting for your program of study and describe the geographic and economic conditions of the region served by the school.

Urban

Suburban

Rural

Other   
  
**STUDENT POPULATION & DATA**

1. Please describe your program of study’s demographic and outcome data for the most recent academic year(s). It is our strong preference to have data from both secondary and postsecondary levels. If this is not available, please provide an explanation as to why the data from the other learner level is not available. Applications that do not include data to support positive impact on student achievement will not be eligible for consideration. (100 word limit)  
     
   The campus has a student population just over 1800 students. 70% of the students are designated “free lunch” with a combined total of nearly 80% free/reduced lunch (Title I). The campus is composed primarily of Hispanics (64%) followed by a combination of Hmong, Asian, White, and Black. EL student population is 14%. The dynamics within AHS involves low-income, non-agriculture students where opportunity to make a positive impact in the lives of young adults through agriculture education is more of a challenge in terms of a student’s background and knowledge, but with any big challenge comes tremendous reward with positive results.

**NOTE**: Please specify if and when you are using a percentage with a different denominator (e.g., seniors) than the one listed.

**When completing the data section, please only use percentages and include data that is from your program of study, not the entire school/institution. Additionally, only include data where students are eligible to participate (e.g., only seniors in high school will be eligible for the section asking for percent of seniors who graduated high school, so only seniors should be included in that data; if your work-based learning only occurs within a specific grade level, only include them in your data for that category.)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SCHOOL YEAR | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
| **SECONDARY-LEVEL DATA** | | | |
| **Total number of students served by your program of study** | 866 | 918 | 922 |
| % male students | 55% | 55% | 52% |
| % female students | 45% | 45% | 47% |
| % minority students | 58% | 61% | 58% |
| % low-income students | 61% | 66% | 61% |
| % students with disabilities | 7% | 10% | 8% |
| % English language learners | 4% | 4% | 3% |
| Other relevant *demographic* data |  |  |  |
| % of students who earned postsecondary credit (dual enrollment, AP, etc.) | No data | No data | No data |
| % of students who earned an industry-recognized credential | No data | No data | No data |
| % of students who participated in work-based learning | No data | No data | No data |
| % of seniors who graduated high school (who were eligible/seniors) | No data | No data | No data |
| % of graduates who enrolled in postsecondary education (who were eligible/seniors) | No data | No data | No data |
| % of graduates who entered the workplace and/or military (who were eligible/seniors) | No data | No data | No data |
| **POSTSECONDARY-LEVEL DATA** | | | |
| **Total number of students served by your program of study** | 135 | 130 | 155 |
| % male students | 58% | 53% | 55% |
| % female students | 42% | 47% | 45% |
| % minority students | 58% | 61% | 58% |
| % low-income students | 61% | 66% | 61% |
| % students with disabilities | 7% | 10% | 8% |
| % English language learners | 4% | 4% | 3% |
| Other relevant *demographic* data |  |  |  |
| % of students who completed postsecondary/earned a degree or certificate (who were eligible) | No data | No data | No data |
| % of students who earned an industry-recognized credential (who were eligible) | No data | No data | No data |
| % of graduates who entered the workplace and/or military (who were eligible) | No data | No data | No data |
| % of graduates who transitioned to further postsecondary education (who were eligible) |  |  |  |

1. Provide links to the source of the above data. If the links are not publicly accessible, please explain the source of the data.

The provided data comes from our school data base. We survey the graduating seniors as to their plans for after high school. By December of the year they graduate we contact them to see if their plans stayed the same or if they changed. We then file our R2 Data report with the state of California. Unfortunately, we do not track data after their graduation.

1. How does your school or institution ensure equitable access and outcomes for students with diverse backgrounds? (150 word limit)

All of our students have equal opportunities. To make all of the efforts available to, we as an entire program fundraise over $100,000 a year through various community activities. 100% of all of the funds go directly to student functions, leadership conferences, and career development events. The community sees a positive return on their investment and graciously continue to support the local students in our program and community.

1. If applicable, what strategies or technologies do you use to close access gaps? (e.g. integrated digital learning, virtual work based learning.)   
     
   To make education relevant and equitable to all, we use a variety of strategies. We are currently a technology 1:1 school, allowing students with from all backgrounds to have the same opportunities. Also in the Atwater Agriculture department, we have a bilingual agriculture teacher. This has been instrumental in expanding opportunities and bridging the learning gaps.
2. What activities does your school or institution do to recruit elementary, middle, high school students and/or adult learners into the program of study? Please provide examples. (150 word limit)  
     
   Every year AHS AG has the opportunity to showcase our program to all incoming freshman from all of our feeder middle schools. We visit the different school sites, as well as invite the students and teachers to visit our site for tours. Every student is provided with all of the information about our program and what it has to offer in both English and Spanish. This has proven to be very successful in recruiting all students.
3. Is your program of study associated with a Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO)? If so, which one(s) and in what way(s)? (Check the [approved list](http://www.ctsos.org/ctsos/) of CTSOs) (50 word limit)

Atwater High School Agriculture Department is associated with the National FFA Organization, and was chartered in 1958. All 1038 students are members of the State and National FFA Organizations. The National FFA Organization is the largest student run Career Technical Student Organization in the Nation.

1. Describe how career guidance/advisement is integrated into your program of study to support students’ completion of the program of study and entry into additional education/training and/or a successful career. Where applicable, describe the tools (individual career and academic plans, career exploration websites, etc.) that are provided to learners and how they are used. (200 word limit)

All of our students are a part of the Agriculture Experience Tracker. This program is a record eBook keeping system for the supervised experience projects, as well as a database for career explorations and opportunities post-secondary. The students are required to do career exploratory projects in a variety of ways in all agriculture classes. We also utilize a variety of our industry partners to expand upon, for tours, visits and guest speaking opportunities. This has allowed student to make career industry connections.

# **COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS/EXPECTATIONS**

1. Please describe how your program of study was developed and how it ensures students are academically and technically prepared for postsecondary education and careers. Please also address the following:
   1. How were employers involved in the development and/or maintenance of your program of study?
   2. How does this program of study meet the economic needs of your community?
   3. How does this program prepare students for postsecondary education? (if applicable)
   4. How were both secondary and postsecondary educators involved in the development and/or maintenance of the program of study? (500 word limit)

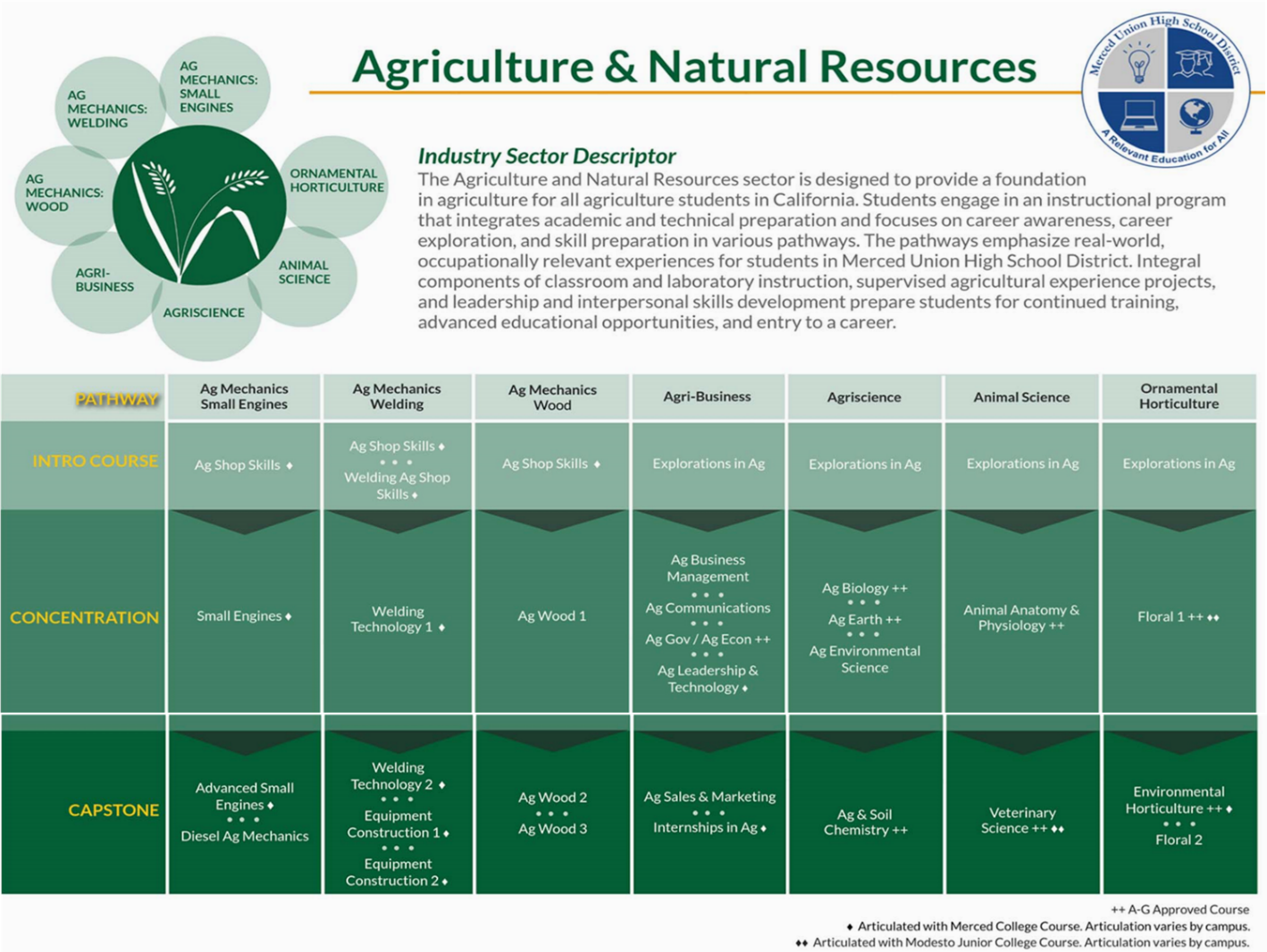
Each year, the Atwater High School Agriculture Department and MUHSD (District) hold agriculture/program advisory committees with industry representatives serving both as advisory members and industry/community guests. Curricular needs based on student academic opportunities, college/career readiness preparation, and industry sector skills and employment trends are all facets included in yearly program development and future planning. The five sectors within agriculture expand through all economic employment opportunities as well as current community socioeconomic data. The 3-circle agriculture education model focuses directly on academic success while providing students UC/CSU credited courses, college articulation(s), and job training skills/courses associated with their area of study. The entire Atwater High School Agriculture Department is directly involved in all facets of local, regional, state, and national curriculum and industry-related program areas of study. Specifics are included in the additional supporting documents.

1. Which technical, academic and/or employability skill standards does your program of study incorporate at the secondary and/or postsecondary level and how? (Please list the standards you use and be specific regarding how your program uses industry, national, state and/or locally-developed standards) (250 word limit)

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| **Standard Types** | **Please list the standards your program of study uses and how it uses them below:** |
| Academic Standards | Our agriculture cluster consists of five agriculture pathways and will be expanding to seven in the upcoming school year. All of our courses are mapped and implement Common Core and/or Next Generation Science Standards. The of courses offered that are A-G approved are taught with rigorous instruction, through agriscience research projects, laboratory experiments, as well as hands on learning projects. Below is a list of the specific academic standards that are explicitly taught by course. [NGSS Ag Biology](https://www.nextgenscience.org/sites/default/files/HS%20LS%20topics%20combined%206.13.13.pdf), [NGSS Ag Earth Science](https://www.nextgenscience.org/sites/default/files/HS%20ESS%20DCI%20combined%206.13.13.pdf), [Common Core Anchor Standards](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/) |
| Career Cluster or Technical Standards | Currently all of our courses have been designed to meet the [California State Developed CTE Standards](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct/sf/documents/agnatural.pdf). The Agriculture Education Model of Instruction includes a 3-circle approach to learning: Classroom, Application of Learned Skills through Supervised Agriculture Experience Programs, and Leadership Development through FFA participation. |
| Employability Standards | California has identified 11 foundation standards that employers would like to see in potential employees; throughout the agriculture education model of instruction delivery, we easily and readily incorporate the foundation standards. All of our standards are integrated through extensive industry relevant projects, employability portfolios and rigorous expectations of the students. |
| Other |  |

# **SEQUENCE OF COURSES & CREDIT TRANSFER**

1. Please fill out the chart below, and describe your program of study’s course sequence by grade level, including the relevant or required academic and technical courses, as well as other required activities.   
     
   Make sure to highlight the course sequence that bridges secondary and postsecondary education, and explain how your program of study ensures students gain the broader Career Cluster-level knowledge/skills and, over time, gain the more specific occupation-level knowledge/skills as they progress through the program of study. You can also include graphics or [plans of study](http://careertech.org/sites/default/files/PlanStudy-CareerCluster-AG_0.pdf) of the course sequence in lieu of filling out the chart below.

The included table shows our current course sequencing available to our students through the Merced Union High School District for the Atwater Agriculture Department. Students are asked to align themselves with the course sequence in which they find the most interest. 

Every agriculture program in the state of California and the Nation is based around a specific model. This model includes three interlocking circles that include the following areas: Classroom Education, Leadership and Supervised Agriculture Experience Programs (projects designed for hands on learning). The reason for the circles to be interlocked is need for each of these to build upon the other.

For example a student may learn a position weld in their agriculture mechanics class (classroom circle), practice this on a Career Development Event (judging team) and obtain a job (SAE) where the skill is used in a real life or job setting. The Agriculture Education model of instruction has been set up to effectively prepare students for career readiness and college preparedness through its 3-ring instructional model. The staff not only understands the model, but also more importantly values each circle encouraging students to actively involve themselves in all three.

The following table gives examples of projects completed in the course work that allow for career skills to be built.

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| ***Course*** | ***Project Based Learning*** | ***Career Skills Gained*** |
| All Courses | Every student in our program is required to have a supervised agriculture experience program (SAE). SAE's are designed to allow students to use the knowledge they gain in the classroom in real world situations. SAE’s can fall under three categories: student owned, work experience, or internship. The key component is that it must be agriculturally related. Each student is required to complete an SAE Report explaining their project, goals, experiences, and future plans. Every student also must keep records of their income, expenses, and hours worked in an agricultural record book. Some example student projects are raising and exhibiting livestock at our local county fair, mowing lawns and landscape maintenance, veterinary clinic internships, growing and selling plants, marketing and processing agriculture commodities, hosting educational petting zoos, building trailers and farming equipment. This project accounts for 10% of every student’s grade in his or her agriculture class. | Skills gained by the students vary on the type of project. Some students learn animal husbandry, welding, veterinary medicine skills, propagation of plants, etc. All students learn dedication, responsibility, record keeping, and profit and loss. |
| Explorations in Agriculture, Introduction to Shop Skills | Each student is required to participate in various projects that can be exhibited at the county fair or sold at our annual plant sales. | This project allows students to gain laboratory skills, which they can take forward and employ in future careers. It also allows for students to practice technical writing, advanced math calculations, data collection, teamwork, and public speaking skills. |
| Floriculture, Veterinary Science, Horticulture, Ag Leadership and Communications | Each student is required to create a career portfolio. Included in these portfolios are: a letter of introduction, a personal resume, completed job application, writing sample, photographs of student projects completed to prove competencies, copies of awards/honors, and career research paper. Students are taught interview techniques and encouraged to participate on the Job Interview CDE Team. | Necessary job and life skills such as completing an application, resumes, and interview are learned by this activity. By teaching skills such as how to properly complete these items, students have an advantage at getting hired. Specific skills gained: application completion, teamwork, self-reflection, research based learning, typing, computer formatting. |
| Floriculture, Food Science,  Agriculture Economics, | Each student is required to work as a member of a team to create a marketing plan for a topic related to their course. A few examples of projects would include: Agriculture Economics, students are given the opportunity to work in a team to design a "new" agricultural product. This product must meet the need of an industry professional. Students create budgets, plans for production of their product, marketing ideas, and potential revenue. Students then try to gain investors in a "Shark Tank" style presentation. Floral Design students are asked to develop and design a portfolio for a potential wedding. A "bride" is brought in to give the students specific for the upcoming nuptials. Students present their plans to the "bride" for her consideration. | Through this project, students learn teamwork, investigation, how think critically, budget creation, research and data collection, and customer service. |
| Advanced Welding | Students in this class during the fall semester, practice their Arc and MIG welding skills by repairing broken equipment on the farm facilities, or around campus. During the spring semester, students are required to design, budget, and build a welding and construction project. Some of these projects include tractor jump trailers, flatbed trailers, backyard BBQ's, smokers, and a variety of ordered projects from community members. In the spring semester students work with partners on these projects to ensure that every project is completed before the end of the school year. | Students enhance their welding, critical thinking, budgeting, design, and fabrication skills. |
| Small Engines, Diesel Power Systems | Students are asked to diagnose, repair, and rebuild used engines to ensure proper operation. Students may bring in an engine from home, or use one of the donated engines that need to be repaired. | Students are asked to critically think, make connections, check inventories, look up part numbers, provide a bill of materials, repair and rebuild an engine. |
| Advanced Wood Shop | Students in this class during the fall semester, practice their wood shop skills by creating a night stand. During the spring semester, students are required to design, budget, and build a wood construction project. Some of these projects include owl boxes, tables, agriculture wood décor, and a variety of ordered projects from community members. In the spring semester students work with partners on these projects to ensure that every project is completed before the end of the school year. | Students enhance their welding, critical thinking, budgeting, design, and fabrication skills. |

As students enter the Atwater Agriculture Department, their initial course provides them with the basic background information about the agriculture industry. Each of the industry sectors are explored allowing for students to find a passion in either Agriculture Sciences, Animal Science, Ornamental Horticulture, or Agriculture Mechanics. During this initial course, students are introduced to careers within the board agriculture industry. Students take a career aptitude test and research a career that is suggested for them. During this career research, students are asked to investigate educational needs, job tasks, and skills. Students are introduced to healthy work habits such as punctuality, integrity, flexibility, and teamwork. During this early coursework, students are introduced to basic knowledge that is built upon in future coursework. After their freshman year, students begin to progress through a series of classes that are specialized to their pathway. It is during these classes that they gain the more specific and advanced occupational skills needed to earn a career. For example, students enrolled in the veterinary science course explore how to take vitals on a patient (respiration rate, temperature, and pulse rate), students take patient histories from mock owners, learn how to give intramuscular, subcutaneous, oral, nasal, and intravenous injections and they learn how to properly restrain small and large animals for veterinary procedures. These skills use prior animal husbandry knowledge gained in their freshman and sophomore years in order to complete them. In order to be able to attain these skills, the students must first have explored reproductive systems and integrated breeding systems, topic taught in lower level courses. In our mechanics pathway, students must first take welding in order to learn how to operate ARC, MIG, and TIG welders, prior to being allowed to advance into our capstone welding class where they build flatbed trailers, farming implements, and repair broken equipment.

1. How do you ensure that CTE instruction and coursework is integrated with core academics?

Atwater High School serves as a model for agriculture education, not only in our district, but at the county, region and state level. The agriculture instructors at Atwater High School, maintain rigorous instruction, but utilizing an authentic blend of CTE and core standards. Of the courses taught at AHS, all agriscience classes are aligned and approved through UC Doorways as college prep courses. This has allowed all of our students to determine their post-secondary course of action as they see fit. They maintain the opportunity to go and obtain an industry job or certification, as well as attend a two or four year school for advancement. Currently agriculture education is based on a three-ring interlocking model that encourages premier leadership, personal growth, and career success, by emphasizing participation in classroom laboratories, FFA, and hands-on out of the classroom skill preparation through Supervised Agriculture Experience Projects. Since 1928, our program has changed immensely in terms of its dynamics. We serve the entire student population, male and female, as well as all ethnicities to enhance their workability skills and give students hands on career training. To make the transition from high school to college easier for students, several of our classes are articulated with the Merced Community College and Modesto Junior College. The Atwater High School Agriculture Department understands that in order to stay current and relevant within the community, we have to meet and exceed the needs of our student population as well as prepare highly qualified entry level students to businesses within the community. Expanding opportunities to students that are relevant and aligned to core academics, not only make agriculture students successful, but all students.

1. List the opportunities for students to earn articulate and/or transcript dual enrollment credit across K-12 and postsecondary, such as AP/IB, dual and concurrent enrollment, capstone experiences and/or transcripted credit articulation agreements. (250 word limit)

Currently twelve courses offered through the Atwater Agriculture Department are articulated with the local community colleges, Merced or Modesto College. These courses are Ag Shop Skills, Welding Technology 1, Welding Technology 2, Equipment Construction 1, Equipment Construction 2, Small Engines, Advanced Small Engines, Ag Leadership and Technology, Internships in Ag, Veterinary Science, Floriculture, and Environmental Horticulture. Students enrolled in these courses earn 2-3 units of college credit at the end of the school year, assuming that they pass the high school course with a “B” or better. Students must also enroll in and complete at least one (1) course at Modesto Junior College for the Veterinary Science and Floral to earn these 3-units of credit. These articulation agreements are currently being re-worked to provide for dual enrollment credit to better serve our students and increase ADA through both the high school district and college district. The courses articulated through Merced Community College are transferable units if the students pass the college credit by exam, which we have had a high success rate of. Dual enrollment courses have already been developed with our school districts in English, Math, and History Courses. By the next school year, Agriculture Course Agreements will be in place. Our district does allow for students to concurrently enroll in college courses during their high school years.

1. Please provide information on **at least three partnerships** with *education institutions and groups* your program of study has, and describe how these partnerships have been built, maintained and sustained over time. Use this space to specifically address the secondary and postsecondary partners that contribute to and maintain this program of study.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Education Partnership Name** | **What role does this partner have in directly supporting your program of study?** | **How many years has this partnership been active, and how was this partnership developed?** |
| Merced Community College | Merced Community College is located within our community of Merced, CA. Atwater Ag Department and MCC work closely with one another to foster cross-curricular educational experiences for students at both facilities. Many students are dually enrolled at MCC and their respective high school to earn college credit while in high school. Many graduating seniors continue their post-secondary education at the MCC facility with the intent of transferring to the university system to major agriculture. Students that want to peruse a “fast track” CTE occupation also enroll at MCC to complete various industry certifications. Over the years, the programs have combined to work together on numerous occasions. MCC is also quick to open up their facilities and equipment for use by Atwater Agriculture students. Over the years, students have had to utilize MCC agriculture mechanics facilities to have more industry exposure to equipment that is not available at our high school. The horticulture facility at MCC has been instrumental in the growth of our plant science pathway. Our Career Development Teams, often times partner up with MCC instructors to prepare and practice for upcoming competitions. As, well, MCC hosts CDE judging events for our students and other local schools to participate in. Our staff communicates weekly, if not daily with members from MCC. | This partnership has been developed and maintained since 2002. It has been on going through the fostering of relationships through various agriculture teachers, depending on the course of instruction. |
| Modesto Junior College | Modesto Junior College is located thirty-five minutes north of Atwater. Atwater Ag Department and MJC work closely with one another to foster cross-curricular educational experiences for students at both facilities. Students that are interested in animal science can obtain units at MJC through our articulated Veterinary Science course. Over the years, students have had to utilize MJC agriculture horticulture facilities to have more industry exposure to equipment that is not available at our high school. Our Career Development Teams, often times partner up with MJC instructors to prepare and practice for upcoming competitions. As, well, MJC hosts CDE judging events for our students and other local schools to participate in. Our staff communicates weekly, if not daily with members from MJC. | This partnership has been developed and maintained since 2002. It has been on going through the fostering of relationships through various agriculture teachers, depending on the course of instruction. |
| California State University, Fresno | California State University, Fresno is a short hour minute drive south of the Atwater High School Ag Department. There is a close working relationship with this institution. Students wanting to enter directly into a 4-year University pursuant on an agricultural degree are encouraged to attend CSU, Fresno for its real-life connection to valley agriculture life and their reputation of turning out stellar graduates. Over the years, the connection through CSUF and AHS Ag Department has been strengthened considerably. The agriculture department serve as a final student teacher preparation site, hosting full-time student teachers each year. These teachers are given a full course load to teach, coaching CDE responsibilities, SAE responsibilities, and treated as a full-time staff member. Student teachers who leave our program are some of the mostly highly sought after new hires in the profession, thanks to their preparation from both facilities. Our students visit the CSUF facilities to work on CDE judging teams, work with instructors on cross-curricular agriculture projects, and leadership development activities. | This partnership has been developed and maintained since 2002. It has been on going through the fostering of relationships through various agriculture teachers, depending on the course of instruction. |
| California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo | Cal Poly, SLO and the AHS Agriculture Department work closely together in a variety of situations. Students wanting to obtain a 4-year degree in agriculture are encouraged to look at Cal Poly, SLO as an option for this continued education. The agriculture department serves as a final student teacher preparation site, hosting full-time student teachers each year. These teachers are given a full course load to teach, coaching CDE responsibilities, SAE responsibilities, and treated as a full-time staff member. Student teachers who leave our program are some of the mostly highly sought after new hires in the profession, thanks to their preparation from both facilities. | This partnership has been developed and maintained since 2002. It has been on going through the fostering of relationships through various agriculture teachers, depending on the course of instruction. |

# **ALIGNMENT WITH INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS NEEDS**

1. Please describe how your program of study is aligned with the needs of the workforce and industry in your community. Make sure to include information on how the program of study helps meet workforce demand identified by business and industry. If applicable, what labor market data does your program of study use to align to workforce needs? (250 word limit)

The Atwater Agriculture Department works with a local Agriculture Advisory Board that meets 2-3 times per year to assist the teachers with the needs and demands of the community work place. There are 9 business professionals that sit on our board and represent the different areas of agriculture education that we teach in. Advisory Board members help us to evaluate the effectiveness of the Ag tech prep program, design curriculum, new courses, revamp old curriculum, and often times serve as guest speakers in our classrooms. During advisory meetings, we discuss the needs of the current market place as well as institute new ideas for incorporations. The committee also provide the teachers with technical assistance and keep him/her aware of new developments in the agricultural industry. The agriculture teachers utilize the advisory committee to provide current resources to develop and maintain an Ag library of visual aids, magazines, and books concerning agriculture and agricultural occupations, serve as speakers at civic clubs, open houses, and career days to tell the story of school-industry cooperation, identify current standards for new equipment. The advisory board are of a great assistance to the teachers in finding suitable work stations (internships, work-study, cooperative learning, partnerships) for students in both production agriculture and agri-industry occupations.

1. Are ALL students in the program of study required to participate in a work-based learning opportunity? YES or NO.

Yes

1. Please describe the work-based learning opportunities available to students who participate in this program of study. (250 word limit)

Agriculture Education is a three circle model that requires classroom instruction, leadership development and promotes career exploration through supervised agriculture experience projects. Supervised Agricultural Experience Programs are an important part of learning for our student at the Atwater Agriculture Department. SAE participation accounts for 10% of a student’s grade in each of our classes. These projects are evaluated on project visits at the student’s home or workplace and by grading the student’s record books each grading period.

The challenging of these projects comes as a result of low socioeconomic status of many of our students. We have been fortunate enough to help our students overcome this situation in many ways. Currently, most of our students participate in their SAE requirement by raising and showing livestock projects. Additionally, over 300 agriculture mechanic, horticulture and floral students exhibit and market their student built/grown projects at our local county fair. Students can serve as managers in the student ran Poultry, Rabbit or Horticulture facilities. Students are also employed by agricultural businesses in our area.

SAE projects are also used to help student achieve degrees of membership within the National FFA Organization. Each year, members obtain their California State FFA degree, the highest degree awarded to FFA members still in high school. Students must meet a minimum requirement of $1000 of earned income, spend 500 hours in excess of class time on their project, 25 hours of community service and broad range of FFA involvement as some of the requirements to obtain the degree.

1. Please list the industry-recognized credentials/certifications/licenses offered/required. If your program of study does not include industry-based credentials/certifications, please explain why. (200 word limit)

The Atwater Ag Department is working with the State California Agriculture Teachers Association to develop industry based credentials that will be provided soon. The Central Region Agricultural Education Career Pathway Consortium was developed and written by members of our staff, the recipient of a California Career Pathways Trust grant of $15,000,000 to improve, expand and initiate Agricultural Mechanics, Agriscience and Ornamental Horticulture career pathways. The CRAECP consortium award focuses on three distinct agricultural industry sectors at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. In the instruction and training of Agricultural Mechanics, Agriscience and Ornamental Horticulture the community colleges will partner with high school agriculture programs and local agriculture industry in the development and implementation of high school courses, CTE pathway programs, community college certificates and degrees, and industry-based certifications that support careers in those sectors.

Past students who complete Floral Design, Welding, Small Engines, Horticulture, Veterinary Science, and Food Science would receive a certificate of completion through Merced County Office of Vocational Education certifying the skills they have learned in our courses. However this program has recently no longer become available.

1. Please describe how you ensure the instructors teaching this program of study keep up-to-date on advancements in the workplace, such as participating in externships and/or requirements to have current industry credentials. (100 word limit)

Annually all of the AHS Agriculture teachers complete a variety of professional development, from a local to nation level. Each of the all of the agriculture teachers are required to participate in the Central Regional Roadshow and State CATA Conference where professional develop workshops are provided on new technologies and techniques we should be teaching in our classrooms. Our instructors also attend a variety of conferences and training through NAAE/ACTE each year.

1. Please provide information on **at least three** *business, industry and/or labor* partnerships your program of study has, and describe how these partnerships have been built, maintained and sustained over time.

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| **Business/Industry Name** | **What role does this partner have in directly supporting your program of study?** | **How many years has this partnership been active, and how was this partnership developed?** |
| Laird Manufacturing/ Kirby Manufacturing/ West-Mark/NCI Buildings | Our agriculture mechanics pathway is a huge draw for students. These courses have allowed students to obtain relevant career industry skills, and be prepared for the work force. Some of the nation’s largest manufacturing companies higher students after they earn a high school diploma and train them through their cooperate training in manufacturing. This opportunity has been significant for all of the agriculture mechanics students, as the various industry partners provide ample support and materials to assist in the education of the students. This partnership has been instrumental in the development of CTE certification development as well. | These partnerships have been developed over the last decade. It is continuously fostered and maintained through the different agriculture teachers. |
| Scoto Farms/ Pedretti Farms/ Roduner Farms/ MN Borba Dairy- | Agriculture Department works closely with local farming operations to gain expertise for our students through internships and assistance on our crop and dairy enterprises, as well as have our crops harvested commercially. . With their knowledge and support, our students gain the ability to experience different facets of production agriculture. Knowledge is transferred from the professionals to our students in the form of hand-on learning experiences. | Over the last 5 years, these partnerships have grown immensely. Each of the farming entities has become an important part of our hands on learning opportunities for students. Each of these farming enterprises also employs several of our students in internship positions and seasonal job opportunities. |
| Mark Sievert & Associates - | Finance management is critical to the success of any person of business. Mr. Sievert comes in on a regular basis to help the graduation seniors prepare and discuss business, stocks, credit, and fiscal management. | These partnerships have been developed over the last decade. It is continuously fostered and maintained through the different agriculture teachers. |
| Helena Chemicals/  California Ag Solutions | Career Development events are an integral part of the Atwater FFA. Students work with local industry partners to learn skills needed for State and National competitions. The companies are a vital resource in helping students with the formulation of pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and marketing of the products. | These partnerships have been developed over the last decade. It is continuously fostered and maintained through the different agriculture teachers. |
| Merced County Farm Bureau - | The Farm Bureau is vital for the success in agriculture. Our local farm bureau organization helps in many facets of our program, from assisting in coordinating different industry connections and opportunities, helping students prepare for local, state and national public speaking events, as well as financially supporting students in their supervised experience project at the local county fairs. | These partnerships have been developed over the last decade. It is continuously fostered and maintained through the different agriculture teachers. |
| Gallo Wine/ Hilmar Cheese/ Northern Merced Hulling/ Foster Farms | These large corporate companies have been instrumental in working with different agriculture instructors based on the courses to assist providing opportunities for supplies or even make financial assistance to allow for student travel opportunities (industry tours, state and national career development events).  Foster Farms has played a major role in the development of our student run poultry facility. Students have the opportunity to raise care for, process and sell cage free eggs. The poultry faculty consists of nearly 100 egg laying hens. | These partnerships have been developed over the last decade. It is continuously fostered and maintained through the different agriculture teachers. |
| Arnolds Farms | The Arnold family, Arnolds Farm, have supported Atwater Agriculture, for nearly two decades. Every year they open their farm to students of the Atwater Ag department to allow them to raise the swine or lamb SAE project for the local county fair. Due to the demographics of the students in our community, if it was not for the Arnold family over 50 students would not get the opportunity to raise a livestock project. The students receive hands on learning opportunities through this project. The Arnolds Family donate their farm facilities free of charge for all of the FFA members. | These partnerships have been developed over the two decades. It is continuously fostered and maintained through the different agriculture teachers. |
| Sequoia Floral International/ Simi Floral Supply | As the largest floral suppliers in the area, we work with Sequoia Floral and Simi Floral on a regular basis for the over 200 students that are taking course in floral design. These students have the opportunity to design, create and sell different floral projects, as well as showcase their skills by working with local brides for wedding floral needs. They also worked with the floriculture CDE team on sales, invoicing, and designing to help them prepare for the national contest. This partnership has been instrumental in the development of CTE certification development as well. | We have been working with Sequoia Floral International and Simi Floral Supply for 3 years now. They have decreased prices of flowers dramatically as our partnership has developed. |

1. Please feel free to use the space below to share any other information or evidence of success of your program of study and the students who participate. (Optional)

See attached supporting documents

1. If applicable, please provide more detail on any partnerships your program of study has that have not been mentioned already. This includes community groups, non-profits, volunteer organizations, etc. Describe how these partnerships have been built, maintained and sustained over time. (Optional)

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| **Additional Partnerships** | **What role does this partner have in directly supporting your program of study?** | **How many years has this partnership been active, and how was this partnership developed?** |
| Samaritan’s Purse | The holiday season is associated with “giving” and as a time to help others. A highlighted example of this spirit is Atwater High School students at Atwater High School in “Operation Christmas Child”. The program is coordinated through an organization called Samaritan’s Purse where school supplies, toys, and hygiene items are collected and placed in show boxes and distributed globally to impoverished countries. The goal was to get 200 shoe boxes organized prior to the Christmas holiday. Atwater Agriculture Leadership with the Atwater High School Leadership class in organizing the event. The process expanded out to other departments and classes including the Art and English departments. The entire school participates with various donations of goodies that went into each box. When it’s all completed, over 200 show boxes of various items was delivered to a local Church, loaded on a semi-truck, and shipped off to various countries where the boxes will travel via boat, plane, train, camel, and foot to various children and families. | This has developed over the last 4 years, as a way to give back on a larger scale. Working with Samaritan’s Purse all stated with an idea, and has continued to grow annually. |
| Atwater Lyons Club/ Atwater Rotary | Both the Lyons and Rotary club are very instrumental in the Atwater community. Their support has been beneficial in expanding opportunities for students in community service. The FFA is built upon a foundation of servant leadership. The Atwater Agriculture Department is a firm believer in this. | These partnerships have been developed over the two decades. It is continuously fostered and maintained through the different agriculture teachers. |

# **SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION**

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* Fill out this application.
* Once you have finished, complete [this form](https://careertech.org/2018-excellence-action-application) and upload the following:
* Your full application saved as a Word document (.docx)
* All of your supplemental documents or evidence consolidated as one PDF document.

**THANK YOU!**

Thank you for completing this application! The selection committee will convene in December 2017 to review the applications and make final decisions. You will know the status of your application by January 25, 2018. The programs of study will be evaluated based on their effective leveraging of partnerships, alignment to rigorous and relevant college- and career-ready expectations, clear progression of knowledge and skills across secondary and postsecondary systems, integration of successful career guidance/advisement, and key indicators of student success.

Don’t forget to use the Excellence in Action award submission checklist to make sure you’ve completed your application in its entirety.

We look forward to learning more about your program!

For questions, concerns please contact [awards@careertech.org](mailto:awards@careertech.org).