

GREATER PEORIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
Workforce Solutions

The CTE Workforce Landscape of Greater Peoria

Annual Report · Career & Technical Education Pipeline Analysis · AY2023–AY2025
Compiled by the Workforce Solutions Team · 2026

18

Educational Institutions

5,254

HS Course Completers
AY2025

1,241

HS Credentials Earned
AY2025

15,550

College Outputs
AY2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Pipeline That Is Producing, Evolving, and Accelerating

Greater Peoria's Career and Technical Education ecosystem is broad, spanning dozens of high schools, colleges, and universities across our five-county region. This inaugural report is based on the 11 high schools and 7 colleges and universities that volunteered to share their data, collectively producing thousands of workforce-ready learners each year. It analyzes their data from AY2023 through AY2025 to highlight the region's talent pipeline, credential attainment momentum, sector strengths, and strategic opportunity areas.

The data tells a story of resilience and acceleration: while high school course completions have stabilized near 5,250 annually, credential attainment has surged 57%, and the number of deeply engaged concentrators has grown by 33%. At the postsecondary level, degree production is rising, and workforce credential output remains strong across healthcare, technology, and manufacturing sectors.

The region's CTE infrastructure is functioning — and with targeted investment, it can be a competitive advantage for business attraction, retention, and quality of life in Greater Peoria.



+57%

HS Credentials Earned
791 → 1,241

+33%

HS Concentrators
1,980 → 2,641

+42%

College Degrees
1,950 → 2,760

#1

Healthcare — Largest
Sector
4,938 outputs (AY2025)

METHODOLOGY

How This Report Was Built

A brief note on how these numbers were gathered, and what they do and do not represent.

Data collected directly from institutions. The figures in this report were gathered directly from the individual high schools, colleges, and universities that chose to participate, not from a central clearinghouse. Each institution supplied its own program, completion, and credential counts for AY2023 through AY2025.

“High schools” means responding high schools. Throughout this report, any reference to “high schools” refers only to the schools that responded to this data request. It is not a count of every high school in the Greater Peoria region.

Why we collected our own data. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) does collect and share high school CTE data, but its reporting is limited to participation and does not capture completions or credentials. Gathering data directly from institutions allowed us to measure the completion and credential outcomes that matter most to employers.

A strong start, and only a start. As an inaugural effort, this report reflects the institutions that were able to participate this year. The numbers are impressive on their own, but they are still only part of the full story. We hope future editions will include even more schools, painting a fuller picture of the region’s talent pipeline.

18 institutions participated in this inaugural data request: 11 high schools and 7 colleges and universities across the Greater Peoria region.



SECTION 1

The Full Pipeline: High School & Postsecondary

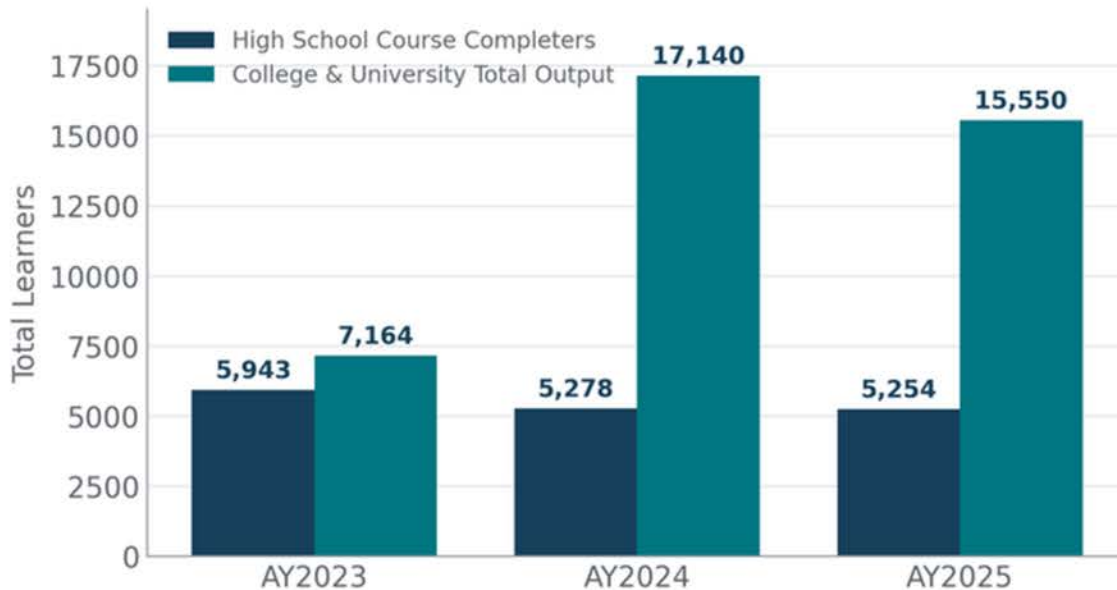
A Dual-Layer Pipeline Serving Thousands of Learners Annually

Greater Peoria's CTE ecosystem operates across two distinct but connected layers. High school programs engage students early — building foundational skills, career awareness, and momentum in their pathways. Colleges and universities then deepen that investment through degrees, certificates, and industry credentials.

In AY2025, high school programs produced 5,254 course completers while postsecondary institutions generated 15,550 total workforce outputs (degrees, certificates, and credentials combined). Together, this represents a multi-tiered talent engine serving the region's employers.

High school completions have stabilized after a dip in AY2024, while postsecondary output has grown significantly since AY2023 — driven largely by expanding credential programs and degree attainment.

Greater Peoria CTE Pipeline: AY2023-AY2025



Economic Relevance: A stable high school pipeline and growing postsecondary output together signal a maturing workforce development ecosystem — one capable of supplying talent to employers at multiple skill levels and career stages.

SECTION 2

Credential Momentum

High School Credentials Surge 57% in Two Years

Industry-recognized credentials earned by high school students climbed from 791 in AY2023 to 1,241 in AY2025 — a 57% increase. This is among the most encouraging signals in the regional dataset.

Credentials represent verified, employer-aligned competencies. Unlike course completions, which measure participation, credentials measure demonstrated readiness. This trend reflects deeper learning outcomes and a growing emphasis on workforce-aligned rigor across the region's CTE programs.

High School Industry Credentials Earned: AY2023-AY2025



Economic Relevance: Higher credential attainment improves job placement outcomes, increases graduate earning potential, and signals to employers that the regional talent pool is job-ready — not just classroom-trained.

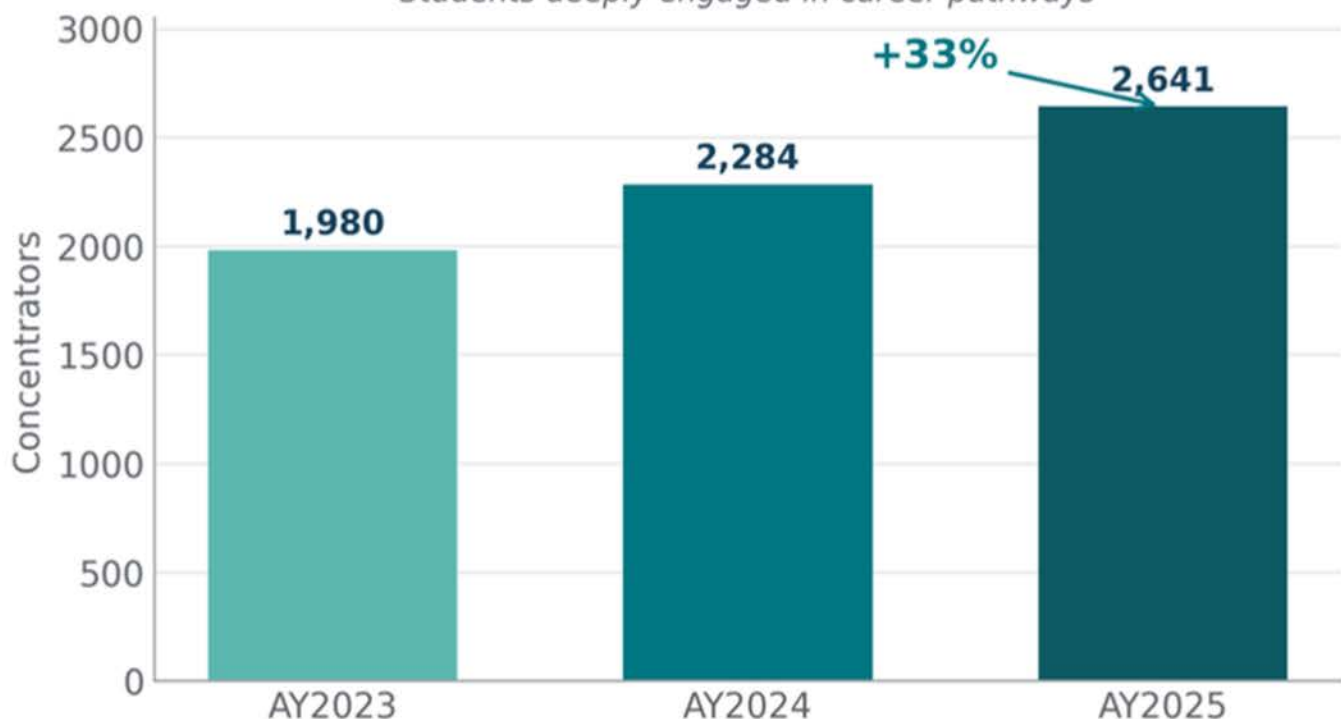
Deep Pathway Engagement Up 33% — A Signal of Future Strength

Concentrators are students who have completed multiple courses within a single CTE pathway, demonstrating sustained commitment rather than casual exploration. This is the metric most predictive of credential attainment and workforce transition success.

The region's high school concentrator count grew from 1,980 in AY2023 to 2,641 in AY2025 — a 33% increase. This trajectory points toward continued credential growth and a strengthening long-term pipeline.

High School CTE Concentrators: AY2023-AY2025

Students deeply engaged in career pathways



Economic Relevance: Growing numbers of concentrators are a leading indicator — today's deeply engaged CTE students are tomorrow's credentialed job seekers and postsecondary enrollees.

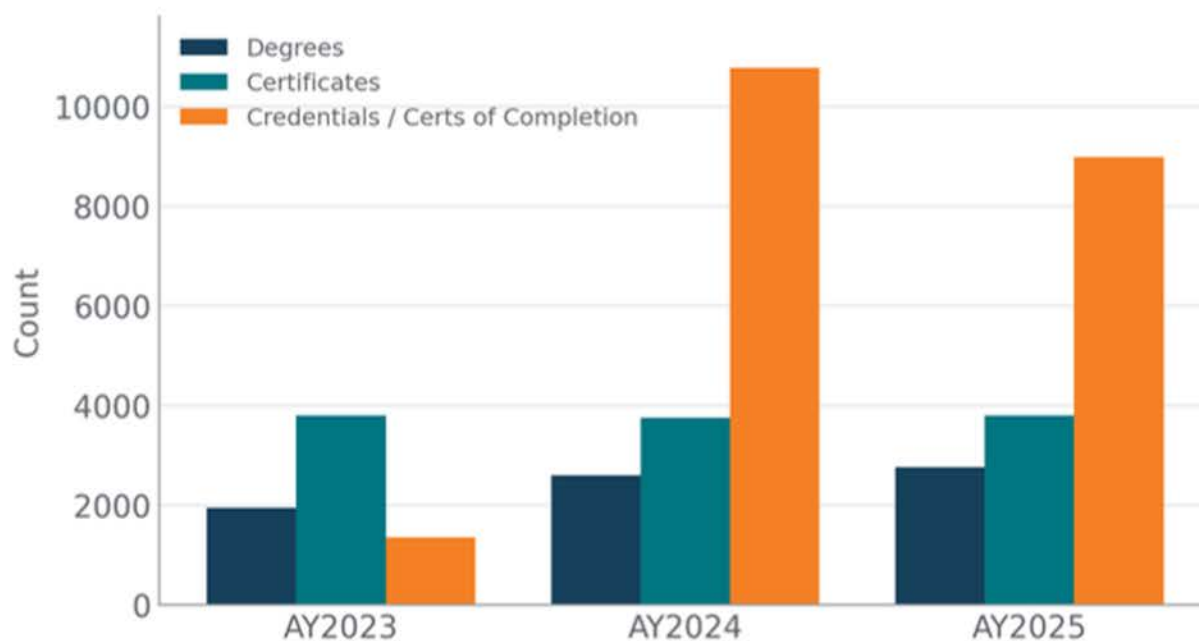
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Postsecondary Credential Output Diversifies and Grows

Across the seven Greater Peoria colleges and universities that participated in this report, degree production has grown steadily, rising 42% from 1,950 degrees in AY2023 to 2,760 in AY2025. Certificate completion has remained stable at approximately 3,800 annually, providing a reliable mid-credential pipeline.

The large credential/completion category saw significant growth in AY2024 (10,772) before normalizing in AY2025 (8,973). This pattern may reflect a post-pandemic burst of workforce development investment, followed by stabilization at a higher baseline than in AY2023.

College & University Credential Output by Type: AY2023-AY2025



Economic Relevance: Diverse credential types serve different employer needs — degrees signal long-term career development; certificates and short-term credentials signal immediate job readiness. A balanced portfolio across all three strengthens regional workforce supply at every level.

SECTION 3

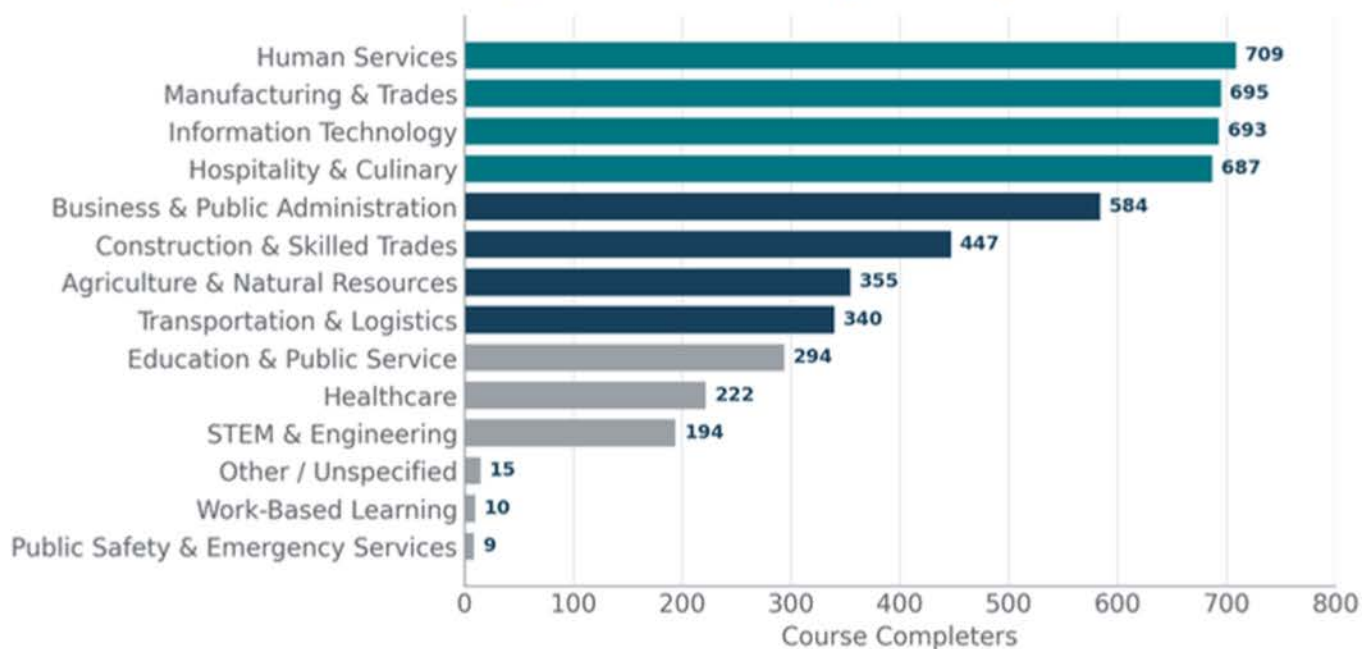
Where Students Are Building Skills

Human Services, Manufacturing, & Technology Lead High School Pathways

In AY2025, high school CTE participation was broadly distributed across 14 sector categories, with the highest concentrations in Human Services (709), Manufacturing & Trades (695), Information Technology (693), and Hospitality & Culinary (687). These four sectors alone account for over half of all course completers.

Sectors with lower completion volumes — including Healthcare (222) and STEM & Engineering (194) — often correspond with high employer demand. These represent strategic expansion opportunities rather than program failures.

High School CTE Completers by Sector — AY2025



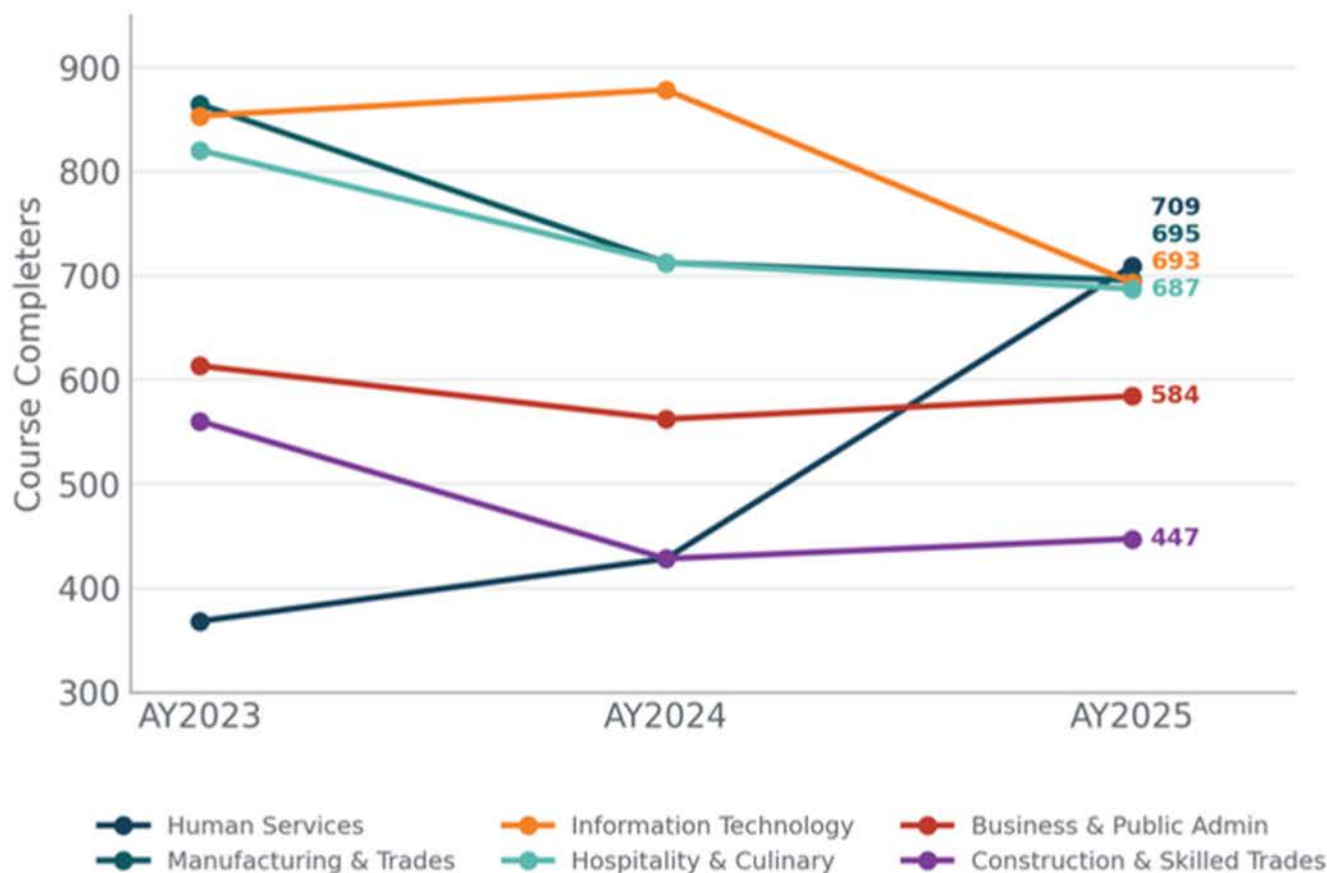
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Sector Trends Reveal Shifts in Student Pathway Choices

Looking at the top six high school sectors over three years, Human Services has grown substantially, from 368 completers in AY2023 to 709 in AY2025, nearly doubling. Manufacturing and Trades and Hospitality & Culinary show modest declines from AY2023 peaks while remaining in the top tier.

Information Technology has held strong near the 700-completion mark across all three years, while Construction & Skilled Trades dipped in AY2024 before partially recovering in AY2025, a trend worth monitoring given construction workforce demand in the region.

Top 6 High School CTE Sectors: Completion Trend AY2023-AY2025



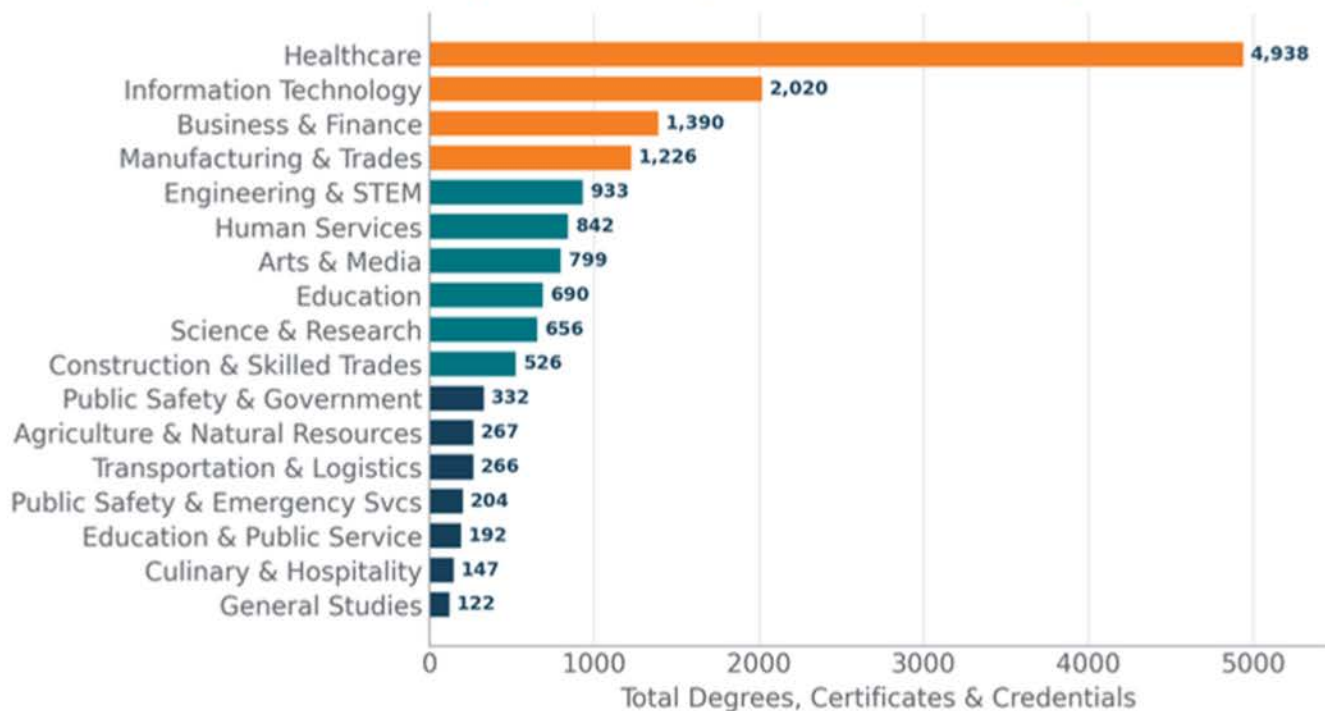
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Healthcare Dominates Postsecondary Output; Technology and Manufacturing Follow

At the college and university level, Healthcare is the undisputed top sector, producing 4,938 total outputs in AY2025. Information Technology (2,020) and Business & Finance (1,390) round out the top three, followed by Manufacturing & Trades (1,226) and Engineering & STEM (933).

This postsecondary sector profile closely aligns with the region's major employer industries, a strong sign of educational-economic alignment.

College & University Workforce Output by Sector — AY2025



Economic Relevance: Healthcare workforce supply is critical to OSF HealthCare, UnityPoint Health, and the broader medical ecosystem that anchors Greater Peoria's economy. Sustained postsecondary output in this sector is essential to regional healthcare system sustainability.

SECTION 4

School-by-School Landscape

Pekin and Metamora Lead in Volume; Peoria High Shows Rapid Growth

Across Greater Peoria's high schools, Pekin Community High School is the region's largest CTE producer — generating 3,203 course completers in AY2025. While this represents a modest decline from its AY2023 peak of 3,889, Pekin remains the dominant contributor and a critical partner for employer engagement.

Metamora Township High School is the second-largest contributor at 1,677 completers, reflecting a stable three-year pattern. Together, Pekin and Metamora account for approximately 93% of high school completions in this dataset.

Peoria High School stands out as a school on the rise, growing from just 16 completers in AY2023 to 159 in AY2025, a nearly 10x increase. Woodruff Career and Technical Center reported its results as credentials rather than course completers — two distinct measures explained in the Glossary. A completer has finished a course of study; a credential is a specific industry certification or license a student earns. Woodruff submitted credential data only, recording 792 industry credentials in AY2025, the highest credential count of any single institution in this dataset.

Economic Relevance: The growth of Peoria High and the credential strength of Woodruff CTC signal meaningful expansion of workforce access in the city's core — exactly where workforce development investment has the highest community return.



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SECTION 5

Strategic Opportunity Areas

The following sectors show comparatively lower CTE completion volumes at the high school level, despite representing high-demand, high-wage industries in the Greater Peoria region. This is a strategic opportunity narrative — identifying where alignment between education supply and employer demand can be strengthened.

Sector	HS Completers (AY2025)	3-Year Trend	Postsecondary Output	Opportunity Level
Healthcare	222	↓ from 243 (AY2023)	4,938 (strong)	High Priority
STEM & Engineering	194	↓ from 363 (AY2023)	933 postsecondary	High Priority
Public Safety & Emergency	9	↑ growing from 2	204 postsecondary	Emerging
Agriculture & Natural Resources	355	↓ from 433 (AY2023)	267 postsecondary	Watch
Transportation & Logistics	340	↓ from 508 (AY2023)	266 postsecondary	Watch

Economic Relevance: The growth of Peoria High and the credential strength of Woodruff CTC signal meaningful expansion of workforce access in the city's core — exactly where workforce development investment has the highest community return.



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CLOSING PERSPECTIVE

What This Data Means for Greater Peoria

The data presented in this report reflects a CTE ecosystem that is producing, evolving, and accelerating. The headline numbers — 5,254 high school completers, 1,241 credentials earned, 15,550 postsecondary outputs, 2,641 concentrators — represent real people building skills that translate into economic contribution.

The most compelling story is not in any single number, but in the trajectory: credentials up 57%, concentrators up 33%, degrees up 42%. These are not incremental improvements — they are structural strengthening of a pipeline that employers depend on.

Workforce Solutions' role is to ensure that this pipeline is visible, valued, and strategically aligned with the industries driving Greater Peoria's economic future. This report is a foundation for that work — and an invitation to partners across education, business, and government to invest in what is already working.

And this is only part of the picture. These results reflect the schools that responded to this inaugural data request — a portion of the region's full CTE system. The story they tell is already one of strength and acceleration; as more institutions join future editions, the complete picture is likely to be stronger still.



Sustain

Protect & grow credential attainment momentum

Align

Overlay demand data to quantify supply gaps

Expand

Scale capacity in Healthcare, Stem and Skilled Trades

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHTS

Where Participation Concentrates, Sector by Sector

For every major sector, the table below identifies the single largest program by AY2025 participation at the high school level and by AY2025 output (degrees, certificates, and credentials combined) at the postsecondary level. Pekin Community High School reports its data at the pathway level, which is why it leads most high school categories.

Sector	Largest High School Program (AY2025 completers)	Largest Postsecondary Program (AY2025 outputs)
Healthcare	Health Science, Pekin Community H.S. (163)	Certified Nursing Assistant, Illinois Central College (631)
Human Services	Human Services pathway, Pekin Community H.S. (534)	Social Work, Bradley University (170)
Manufacturing & Trades	Manufacturing pathway, Pekin Community H.S. (387)	Production Welder, Illinois Central College (170)
Hospitality & Culinary	Hospitality & Tourism, Pekin Community H.S. (485)	Culinary Arts Management, Illinois Central College (147)
Information Technology	Arts, AV, Tech & Communication, Pekin Community H.S. (153)	Interactive Media Game Design, Bradley University (297)
Construction & Skilled Trades	Architecture & Construction, Pekin Community H.S. (329)	Construction, Bradley University (203)
STEM & Engineering	STEM pathway, Metamora Township H.S. (130)	Mechanical Engineering, Bradley University (369)
Transportation & Logistics	Transportation, Distribution & Logistics, Pekin Community H.S. (177)	Truck Driver Training, Illinois Central College (138)

The Biggest Opportunity for Growth

Healthcare is the region's clearest growth opportunity. Just 222 high school students completed healthcare coursework in AY2025, feeding a sector in which our colleges and universities produced 4,938 outputs and employer demand still outpaces supply. Every added seat in a high school health science pathway has both a college program and a job waiting for it.

Manufacturing & Trades and Transportation & Logistics follow closely: both pair strong employer demand with declining high school completions. The encouraging signal is that credential-rich programs are already proving the model. Architecture & Construction credentials at Pekin nearly tripled from 55 to 161 in two years, and Woodruff CTC students earned 94 I-CAR auto-industry credentials in AY2025. When a pathway leads to a credential employers recognize, students enroll. That is the playbook for the sectors that need talent most.

FOR EMPLOYERS

How Businesses Can Help Build the Pipeline

No school starts or expands a CTE program on a hunch. Programs launch when schools can point to a direct outcome: a local employer that will interview, hire, or train students who complete the program. That means the region's businesses are not just customers of this pipeline; they are its most powerful catalyst. Here is how an employer of any size can engage.

Signal your demand. Tell your local high school and GPEDC what roles you hire for, how many, and which credentials matter to you. A documented hiring need is the single strongest case a principal can take to a school board to start or grow a program.

Join a program advisory committee. CTE programs are required to consult industry. A few hours each semester shape the curriculum, keep equipment lists current, and ensure graduates arrive with the skills you actually need.

Open your doors for work-based learning. Job shadows, internships, co-ops, and youth apprenticeships turn classroom interest into career commitment. Work-based learning is currently the smallest category in the regional dataset, making it the fastest way for an employer to make a visible difference.

Sponsor credentials and equipment. Exam fees, tooling, and materials are often the barrier between a course and an industry-recognized credential. Underwriting them puts your name on the region's fastest-growing success metric: credentials earned are up 57% in two years.

Lend your people. Guest instructors, mock interviewers, and summer externships for teachers bring the workplace into the classroom, and help address the instructor shortage that limits how many students a program can serve.

Hire, then close the loop. Commit to interviewing program completers, and tell the school how those hires perform. Nothing sustains a program, or justifies expanding it, like graduates visibly succeeding at a local employer.

Ready to start? GPEDC Workforce Solutions and the Regional Workforce Alliance broker each of these partnerships and can connect your business with the right school, program, and pathway. One conversation is all it takes to begin.



GLOSSARY

The Credential Landscape, Decoded

The terms below appear throughout this report. They are not interchangeable: each represents a different level of commitment, verification, and value in the labor market.

Course Completer. A student who finished at least one course in a CTE pathway during the academic year. Completions measure participation and early career exposure.

Concentrator. A student who has completed multiple courses within a single pathway, signaling sustained commitment. Concentration is the strongest predictor of credential attainment and workforce transition.

Industry-Recognized Credential. The umbrella term for any portable award validated by a third party that verifies job-ready skill to an employer. Certifications, licenses, and industry certificates all qualify.

Certification. Awarded by an industry body, usually after an exam, to verify a defined competency. Examples from this dataset include OSHA 10 Safety, ServSafe, and I-CAR. Certifications are typically renewable and recognized across employers.

Certificate. Awarded by a school or training program to recognize completion of a defined course of study, such as a welding or HVAC certificate. Unlike a certification, it attests to completed coursework rather than to an external exam passed.

License. A credential required by a government body to legally practice an occupation, such as Certified Nursing Assistant, barbering, or nail technology. Several Woodruff CTC programs lead directly to state licensure.

Badge / Microcredential. A short, narrowly scoped recognition of a single skill, often digital, such as Bradley University's Power BI and telehealth microcredentials. Fast to earn and designed to stack toward larger awards.

Endorsement. A designation on a student's diploma or transcript confirming completion of a full career pathway, including coursework and work-based experiences.

Degree. An associate, bachelor's, or graduate award representing multi-year academic and technical preparation, conferred by the region's colleges and universities.

Stackable Credentials. A sequence of awards that build on one another so a worker can advance without starting over, such as CNA to LPN to RN to BSN, a pathway offered across several participating institutions.

Work-Based Learning (WBL). Structured, supervised experiences at an employer site, including job shadows, internships, co-ops, and apprenticeships, jointly overseen by schools and businesses.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With Gratitude to Our Education Partners

This report exists because educators across Greater Peoria said yes. Behind every number in these pages is a school that volunteered its time, opened its records, and trusted us with its story. We are deeply grateful to the administrators, CTE directors, and data teams at the following institutions, whose willingness to share their program data made this inaugural analysis possible.

High Schools



Deer Creek-Mackinaw High School



Delavan High School



Dunlap High School



Fieldcrest High School



Metamora Township High School



Pekin Community High School



Midwest Central High School



Peoria High School



Princeville High School



Roanoke-Benson High School



Woodruff Career and Technical Center

Colleges & Universities



Bradley University



City College



Eureka College



Heartland Community College



Illinois Central College



Methodist Community College



Illinois State University

THANK YOU...

The strength of Greater Peoria's workforce begins in our classrooms and grows through the partnerships that connect education with opportunity. Thank you to every educator, administrator, and community partner who contributed to this inaugural report.

— Greater Peoria Economic Development Council



