Building the Infrastructure for Industry-Led Apprenticeship

California’s approach to industry leadership, public coordination, and scale



US CEMETS INSTITUTE 2026 • CALIFORNIA TEAM

U.S. ADVANCED CEMETS INSTITUTE

The Institute brings together leaders working to create state-level education and training systems informed and inspired by Switzerland's Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) system.

Participants will focus on the critical role of employer engagement in designing and implementing a professional education and training pathway that starts with a high school apprenticeship program, includes adult training programs, and is formally integrated with the education system. During this time, participants will:

Study and Learning

- Learn how leading states are working to develop their version of employer-led pathways
- Receive hands-on support from international reform experts around strategy development, implementation activities and research agendas.

Action Planning

- Determine how to establish and strengthen leadership and convening structures to deepen industry engagement in existing education and training efforts.
- Develop funding models to support this work in the next 3-5 years.

Ongoing Engagement

- Learn how the three partners plan to continue supporting ongoing state-level and cross-state strategy development, implementation, and research efforts focused on employer-led vocational and professional education and training pathways and systems.





Why U.S. Advanced CEMETS Now?

State-Led Innovation: U.S. states are uniquely positioned to lead in building education and training systems that align with economic and social needs, making now the right time to focus on state-level activities and engage in cross-state learning forums.

Employer Engagement is Critical: The Institute focuses on empowering employers to co-design and implement pathways that include some combination of high school apprenticeships and adult training programs, to expand ways to meet employer talent needs.

Inspired by a Proven Model: Drawing on Switzerland's successful Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) system, the Institute offers a research-backed framework adapted for the U.S. context.

Action-Oriented Collaboration: Participants will develop and implement state-specific action plans, while contributing to a national effort that combines strategy, implementation, and research.

Sustained National Momentum: The 2026 convening continues our cross-state collaborative and enables each state team to learn from each others challenges and successes.

U.S. ADVANCED CEMETS INSTITUTE

#CareerWise ETH zürich

2026 INDY

California's Engagement in CEMETS

2026 US CEMETS delegation
Our work needs to be more system focused - and include state-level leaders. It must leverage existing assets and momentum and build upon existing systems and structures.



2025 CEMETS delegation

2019 CEMETS delegation

2025 US CEMETS delegation

THE OPPORTUNITY:

California has an opportunity to transition to a permanent, sustainably funded, industry-led structure at the regional and state levels that organizes employers and drives apprenticeship growth in priority industries across all regions.

But currently…

Business leadership is often program-specific, advisory in nature, and dependent on state appropriations and grant funding rather than embedded in an enduring infrastructure.

Why?

- ❏ Non-trades funding (to date) is largely one-time or competitive and is not designed for long-term or systematic support.
- ❏ Existing industry bodies play advising roles rather than fully owning any functions.
- ❏ Without sustained industry engagement, system functions are led and/or addressed by different government agencies.
- ❏ Most sectors lack a lasting organization that pools employer demand, like the trades' multi-employer programs.

The Opportunity Ahead







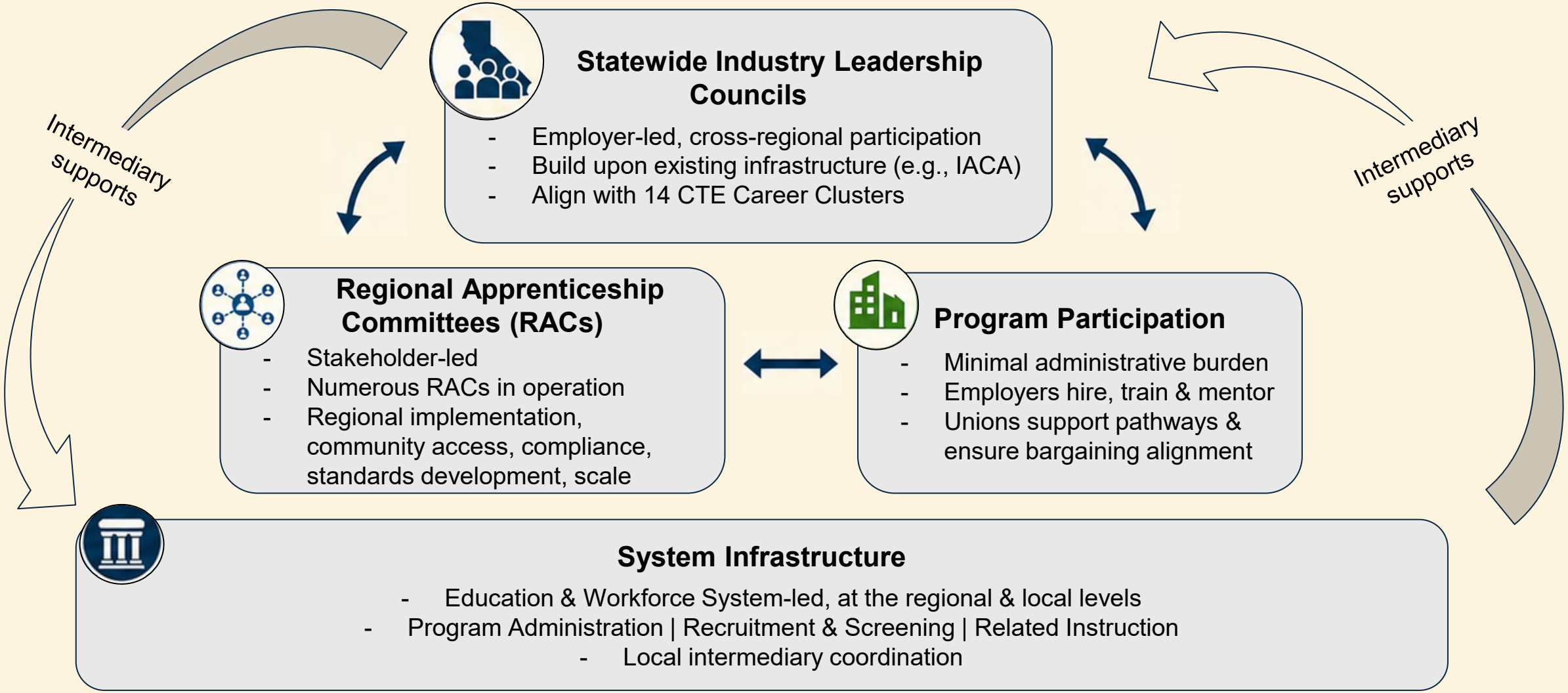




Coordinated regional & statewide infrastructure for sector leadership within non-traditional apprenticeship

The proposed structure will build on existing assets in the system.

California has a representative cluster across the field that already see the value of statewide partnership structures.



Proposed Statewide & Regional Structures

Statewide Healthcare Industry Leadership Council



Healthcare Regional Apprenticeship Committee

Program Participants (Businesses, Unions)

LEAs (K12, CCs) Workforce Boards AJCCs

Core Workstreams

Defining Roles & Authority

SOLVES FOR

Industry advises but owns no functions; government agencies lead by default

BY MONTH 42

Industry owns defined functions, not advisory seats

Organizing Employers & Industry

SOLVES FOR

No lasting organization pools employer demand.

BY MONTH 42

Priority sectors each have a standing industry organization

Funding & Statutory Structures

SOLVES FOR

One-time, competitive funding

BY MONTH 42

Statutory funding and tax incentives replace one-time grants

The test of success:

Businesses engage in the system without having to reinvent it.



INDUSTRY

leads direction + validates quality

PUBLIC SYSTEMS

deliver + institutionalize capacity

INTERMEDIARY

coordinates what benefits from scale

Preserve what works. Build what is missing. Institutionalize what must last.