CREDENTIALS AND MEASURABLE SKILLS GAINS

CREDENTIALS

Credential Attainment is the percentage of participants enrolled in an education or training *program (excluding those in on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training)* who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program; thus the significance of WIOA Follow-up Services Policy 5.23.

Youth participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent are included in the percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent *only* if the participant also is employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.

For each core program, a description of who is considered to be enrolled in an '*education or training program*', and therefore included in the credential attainment indicator, includes:

- ***Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker:*** All Adult and Dislocated Worker program participants who were enrolled in an education or training program *(excluding those in an OJT or Customized Training)* are included in the credential attainment indicator.
- ***Title I Youth:***
  - In-school Youth (ISY): All ISY are included in the credential attainment indicator due to attending secondary or postsecondary school.
  - Out-of-school Youth (OSY): Only OSY who participate in one of the following are included in the credential attainment indicator:
    - Program element of Occupational Skills Training *(OST)*
    - Secondary *(high school)* education at or above the 9th-grade level during participation
    - Postsecondary education during participation
    - Title II Adult Education and Literacy *(AEL)* funded at or above the 9th-grade level;
    - YouthBuild during participation
    - Job Corps during participation

RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS

A recognized postsecondary credential is awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or industry/occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an industry/occupation. These technical or industry/occupational skills generally are based on standards developed or endorsed by employers or industry associations.

RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS ARE AWARDED BY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENTITIES INCLUDING:

- A state education agency, or a state agency responsible for administering vocational and technical education within a state;
- An institution of higher education described in Section 102 of the Higher Education Act *(20 USC 1002)* that is qualified to participate in the student financial assistance programs authorized by Title IV of that Act. Including community colleges, proprietary schools, and all other institutions of higher education that are eligible to participate in federal student financial aid programs;
- A professional, industry, or employer organization *(AWS for welding)* using a valid and reliable assessment of an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities;
- ETA's Office of Apprenticeship or a State Apprenticeship Agency;
- A public regulatory agency, upon an individual's fulfillment of educational, work experience, or skill requirements that are legally necessary for an individual to use an occupational or professional title or to practice an occupation or profession;
- A program that has been approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer education benefits to veterans and other eligible persons;

- Institutions of higher education that are formally controlled, or have been formally sanctioned or chartered by, the governing body of Tribes; and
- Job Corps.

TYPES OF SECONDARY/POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS:

- Secondary *(high school)* school diploma or recognized equivalent;
- Associate's degree;
- Bachelor's degree;
- Occupational licensure;
- Occupational certificates *(including Registered Apprenticeship and Career and Technical Education educational certificates)*;
- Occupational certification; and
- Other recognized certificates of industry/occupational skills completion are sufficient to qualify for entry-level or advancement in employment.

CERTIFICATES VS CERTIFICATIONS

- Certificates are completion-based and denote participation in a defined course of study and are typically not eligible to be counted towards the credential attainment indicator since they do not prepare individuals with the competencies required to perform a specific occupation.
- Certifications attest to the attainment of competence through a rigorous examination or demonstration and may also have a work experience requirement.

CREDENTIAL DOCUMENTATION

Acceptable documentation includes:

- Data crossmatch
- Copy of credential *(e.g., a certificate from obtaining a license or degree)*
- Copy of school record 9 *(e.g., year-end transcripts with the 'Date Conferred')*
- Case notes documenting information obtained from education or training provider *(letter or email from education or training provider must be uploaded in SDWORKS)*

MEASURABLE SKILLS GAIN

Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) is the percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving MSG, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment.

The MSG indicator is different from the other indicators because it is not exit-based, meaning that a participant can achieve a measurable skill gain while still participating in a program. All participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment are counted in the MSG indicator.

The following participants in education or training programs are included:

- ***Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker***: All participants who are enrolled in an education or training program, are included in the MSG indicator. This includes all participants in work-based training.
- ***Title I Youth:***
    - In-School Youth (ISY): All ISY are included in the MSG indicator since they are attending secondary or postsecondary school.
    - Out-of-School Youth (OSY): Only OSY who are in one of the following are included in the indicator:
        - the program element of occupational skills training
        - the program element education offered concurrently with workforce preparation
        - secondary education during participation in the title I Youth program
        - postsecondary education during participation in the title I Youth program
        - Title II-funded adult education during participation in the title I Youth program

- the YouthBuild program during participation in the title I Youth program
- Job Corps during participation in the title I Youth program

TYPES OF MEASURABLE SKILLS GAINS & ACCEPTABLE DOCUMENTATION

- ***Educational Functioning Level (EFL):*** Documented achievement of at least one EFL of a participant who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary education level. Programs may measure EFL gains in one of the following ways:
  - Pre-Test and Post-Test: Results from state-approved tests *(e.g., BEST or TABE)* of the same version that shows an increase of at least one EFL; *OR*
  - Enrollment in Postsecondary Education or Training: Participants who exit a program below the postsecondary level and enroll in postsecondary education or training during the program year as determined through case notes and uploaded acceptance letter(s).

    IMPORTANT NOTE: A program below the postsecondary level applies to participants enrolled in a basic education program.

- ***Secondary School Diploma/Recognized Equivalent:*** Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent by obtaining certification of achieving passing scores on all parts of a State-recognized high school equivalency test.
  - Accepted documentation includes:
    - Copy of credential
    - Copy of school record
    - Case notes documenting information obtained from education or training provider *(must upload documentation into SDWORKS)*

- ***Transcript/Report Card:*** Secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the State unit's academic standards as follows:
  - Must show grades of D or higher and/or be considered passing.
  - The semester must have occurred within the current program year.
  - The document must reflect that the participant is in good academic standing *(nothing to indicate that the participant dropped out of school or was removed from the institution on academic/conduct grounds).*

    Secondary Education: Documented through receipt of a secondary transcript or report card for one semester showing that the participant is achieving the State unit's policies for academic standards (noted above). The secondary transcript is specific to youth attending high school.

    Postsecondary Education: The transcript must reflect a sufficient number of credit hours.
    - *Full-time Students:* Minimum of 12 credit hours per semester
    - *Part-time Students:* Minimum of 12 credit hours during a program year *(July 1 – June 30)* that show a participant is achieving the State unit's academic standards.

    IMPORTANT NOTE: If a postsecondary student completed 6 hours in the spring semester and 6 more hours in the fall semester and those semesters crossed two program years, they would not count as a skill gain in the first program year, but they would count as a skill gain in the second program year. In other words, the Measurable Skill Gain occurs at the end of the 12 hours of accrued academic credit if coursework is split across two program years.

- ***Training Milestone/Progress Report:*** Satisfactory or better progress report towards established milestones from an employer or training provider who is providing training. Progress reports must document substantive skill development that the participant has achieved. Milestones should be established in advance *(participant's Employment Plan)* of the education or training program, to be considered an 'established milestone'.
  - Acceptable documentation includes:
    - Documentation of a final OJT progress report or completion of a one-year *(or other pre-determined milestones)* Registered Apprenticeship program.

        - Contract and/or evaluation from employer or training provider documenting a skill gain, or training reports on milestones completed as the individual masters the required job skills.
        - Increases in pay resulting from newly acquired skills or increased performance also can be used to document progress if provided as an evaluation from the employer.
        - Progress report from employer documenting a skill gain that the participant has achieved.

- ***Skills Progression:*** Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or, progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks, such as a knowledge-based exam.
    - Acceptable documentation includes:
        - Results of knowledge-based exam or certification of completion, including a component exam of a Registered Apprenticeship program.
        - Documentation demonstrating progress in attaining technical or occupational skills.
        - Documentation from training providers or employers such as satisfactory attainment of an element on an industry or occupational competency-based assessment.
        - Copy of credential that is required for a particular occupation and only is earned after the passage of an exam *(e.g. Class A Commercial Driver's License or Certified Nursing Assistance License)*

EXCLUSIONS

Participants who hard exit from WIOA Title I are excluded from the Credential and Measurable Skill Gains indicators. See Exit Policy 6.2 under 'Exclusion from Exit'.

WIOA §3(37) & §134(2)(A)(bb)
20 CFR §361-430(4)(A)(B)
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