CREDENTIALS

The Department of Labor’s high priority performance goals is to increase the number of people who receive training, attain a degree or certificate, and find subsequent employment through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs (adult, dislocated, youth, etc).

Training is often only one component of the certificate performance measures. In most instances, successful completion of training is coupled with other requirements to receive a credential.

Credential means an award in recognition of an individual’s attainment of measurable technical or occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation. These technical or occupational skills are generally based on standards developed or endorsed by employers. Credentials awarded by workforce investment boards are not included in this definition, nor are work readiness credentials because neither of them document “measureable technical or occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation.” A variety of different public and private entities issue credentials. Below is a list of types of organizations and institutions that award industry-recognized credentials:

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

Diploma means any certificate that the state education agency accepts as equivalent to a high school diploma. This term also includes post-secondary degrees such as Associate (AA and AS) and Bachelor (BA and BS) degrees.

Education means participation in secondary school, post-secondary school, adult education programs, or any other organized program of study leading to a degree or certificate.

Employer endorsement means that employers within a particular industry or cluster of industries recognize the certificate and would not impose an employment barrier because the program was completed in another state or other regional location.

Post-secondary Education means a program at an accredited degree-granting institution that leads to an academic degree (i.e., AA, AS, BA or BS). Graduate level degrees (Masters Level) does not count as credential attainment for Title I, but does count for the purpose of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR Title IV).
**Non-credentialed training:** Training that enhances employability but does not in itself result in a credential. If the training program itself does not include a credential, the participant's training can still be funded through WIOA as non-credentialed training. Non-credentialed training would not count as a credential in performance reporting, since a credential is not earned as part of that particular training. Non-credentialed training may count as a measurable skill gain.

WIOA §3(37) & §134(2)(A)(bb)  
20 CFR §361-430(4)(A)(B)  
TEGL 10-15 and 10-16  
SDDLR Policy §6.4  
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