



For Immediate Release

## Six Major State Policy Associations Join in Commitment to Credential Transparency

*A first-of-its-kind State Policy Partnership will lead the way on education and workforce data innovation, bringing open, comprehensive and up-to-date information about credentials, competencies and skills to millions of workers and employers*

**(Washington, DC)**—Today, six leading state policy organizations joined Credential Engine to create the first State Policy Partnership focused on expanding credential transparency. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), Data Quality Campaign (DQC), Education Commission of the States (ECS), National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), National Governors Association (NGA), State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO), and Credential Engine will lead strategic state-level efforts in policy development, resource-building, and alignment.

Tens of millions of Americans will have to scramble to build new skills for a vastly different job market when the coronavirus pandemic eases. It's unfair to expect them to make smart choices without the information they need to sort through a confusing marketplace for work credentials after high school. In a September 2019 report, Credential Engine found that the United States has more than 738,000 unique credentials including diplomas, certificates, certifications, licenses, and degrees of all types and levels. The report called for more transparency in the education, training and jobs marketplace, from the competencies various credentials aim to convey to their relative value. This Partnership will build on work done to date in 16 states to build out the infrastructure to reveal the credential marketplace, increase credential literacy, and empower everyone to make more informed decisions about credentials and competencies and their value.

“State legislators are at the forefront of identifying and addressing how changes in work will affect their state’s economies and workers,” said Tim Storey, executive director of the National Conference of State Legislatures. “This Partnership will provide legislators with actionable information about innovation in education, the skills needed for success and the credentials that signal competence in the workplace.”

“Governors are committed to building stronger pathways to economic opportunity for all of their residents. This State Policy Partnership is a vital, common-sense approach that will provide state leaders with the tools they need to demystify the world of professional credentials,” said Amanda Winters, program director in the Economic Opportunity division of the NGA Center for Best Practices. “Through this partnership we’re glad to support governors’ ongoing efforts to build a marketplace for credentials that empowers learners and improves outcomes for businesses.”

“This Partnership carries great potential to inform state policymakers in a new way—helping to ensure the credentials available in their state align with the unique and evolving demands of their workforce,” said Education

Commission of the States President Jeremy Anderson. “We’re excited to join the Partnership, which will put more actionable information into the hands of state education leaders, as well as employers and job-seekers.”

Using a multi-pronged approach, the State Policy Partnership will collaborate with states to identify and capitalize on key opportunities to adopt and deliver credential transparency including awareness, inter-initiative alignment, data infrastructure, policy implementation, and sustainability. The Partnership will also work to support state efforts to better identify credentials of value, develop and disseminate models and lessons from leading states to serve as roadmaps, convene peer networks for governors, state boards, legislators, and agency heads to facilitate learning and shared efforts, and curate a collection of policy, communications, and technical resources.

“Education and economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic underscore the importance of ensuring that students and their families have information on the pathways available and potential outcomes of pursuing those credentials. Without transparency about the opportunities available to them and easy-to-find, actionable information about the skills needed for success in the workforce, students and families are left to make these life-altering decisions in the dark,” said Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger, president and CEO of The Data Quality Campaign. “Importantly, this partnership will advance and expand the amount of information available to families following the crisis and throughout recovery.”

“Chiefs are committed to providing high quality career readiness pathways for all students,” said Carissa Moffat Miller, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers. “This partnership, part of CCSSO’s ongoing career readiness work, will help guide state education leaders as they work with partners in business and higher education to identify credentials of value based on labor market information. This cross-sector approach will allow states to better support students and their families in making informed decisions on the opportunities and options available to reach their post-secondary academic and career goals.”

“Credential Engine’s State Policy Partnership represents a hopeful collaboration involving state policymakers to expand access to consequential information about postsecondary credentials. The work has implications for students and states, as education remains one of the most certain paths to a better life for states and their citizens—individuals, families, and entire communities. In addition to the considerable costs associated with pursuing postsecondary education (time and money), states will be challenged to achieve attainment goals and sustainable economic development without investing in their people,” said SHEEO president Rob Anderson. “This State Policy Partnership is one systematic way to do just that. It’s an investment in states’ human capital. SHEEO is pleased to join with partner organizations to build credential literacy to the benefit of states and other stakeholders.”

“State policymakers are searching for ways to help students and workers find the most efficient and cost-effective pathways to secure the right skills and credentials that lead to good jobs,” said Scott Cheney, Executive Director of Credential Engine. “This Partnership demonstrates a first-of-its-kind commitment across a wide spectrum of education and workforce policy organizations to the idea that credential transparency is central to supporting these state efforts. With the proven technologies already in place, this Partnership is well-positioned to expand the capabilities of states to meet their educational and economic needs and make meaningful positive impacts for students and workers.”

The announcement of the State Policy Partnership comes as Credential Engine has already garnered commitments to credential transparency from 17 state and regional partners since its official launch in December 2017. The Partnership will kick off efforts this year with select pilot partners and looks forward to growing state initiatives over the coming years.

###

[Credential Engine](#) is a non-profit whose mission is to create credential transparency, reveal the credential marketplace, increase credential literacy, and empower everyone to make more informed decisions about credentials and their value. Credential Engine receives support from Lumina Foundation, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Walmart, Northrop Grumman Foundation, ECMC Foundation, Microsoft, the National Science Foundation, Siegel Family Endowment, and Google.org.

Credential Engine Contact: Scott Cheney [scheney@credentialengine.org](mailto:scheney@credentialengine.org)

Council of Chief State School Officers Contact: Carolyn Phenicie [Carolyn.Phenicie@ccsso.org](mailto:Carolyn.Phenicie@ccsso.org)

Data Quality Campaign Contact: Blair Mann [bmann@dataqualitycampaign.org](mailto:bmann@dataqualitycampaign.org)

Education Commission of the States Contact: Mandy Zatynski [mzatynski@ecs.org](mailto:mzatynski@ecs.org)

National Conference of State Legislatures Contact: Sunny Deye [sunny.deye@ncsl.org](mailto:sunny.deye@ncsl.org)

National Governors Association Contact: Amanda Winters [AWinters@nga.org](mailto:AWinters@nga.org)

State Higher Education Executive Officers Association Contact: Annahita Jimmerson [ajimmerson@sheeo.org](mailto:ajimmerson@sheeo.org)