



Credential Engine's technologies and infrastructure support numerous goals and requirements that are important to state agencies and systems. Below are some examples of statewide priorities that can be implemented with or supported by a common language and open source, comparable data about education and training opportunities. While state partners often focus on one or two high priority use cases to start, the work to make all credentials transparent, connected, and comparable can ultimately unlock additional opportunities.

## **State Agency Approving Functions**

State agencies are tasked with developing policies and processes to review and approve education and training opportunities for a variety of purposes, including federal funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and state funding such as Indiana's "Next Level Jobs" initiative. Each of these functions require state agencies to collect and analyze information about credentials, but many states have outdated, insufficient, or duplicative activities to gather the necessary information. Credential Engine's common language and open-source Registry can support and simplify these processes across a state. When states utilize these technologies, there is a single, up-to-date source of information that can be used across all approving functions, which reduces the reporting burden for providers, decreases the cost of collecting necessary information, and streamlines internal processes. Further, because the information in the Registry is linked open data, it can be easily used for any tool or application built by the state and by external application developers - helping make these opportunities more visible and ensuring residents have the information and tools they need to make informed decisions.

In **New Jersey**, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development oversees approval of private career schools as well as eligible training providers under WIOA; these applications have historically been paper-based and the data has been displayed in a tool that is not user friendly or open-source. As part of a larger overhaul of state data systems, leaders plan to use the CTDL to describe all credential data in New Jersey and publish this information to the Registry. Doing so will streamline the providers' application process and user experience and ensure the information is up-to-date, accurate, and comparable. The state will also be able to build an interactive, mobile-friendly application for students and job-seekers to explore their options while ensuring the data is accessible for other tools and applications.

## **Defining Career and Education Pathways**

To ensure residents have the information they need to pursue careers that are in-demand, many state leaders are focused on defining and developing career pathways in high-growth or high-potential occupations. Vital components of this work include identifying high quality, relevant education and training opportunities along those pathways, defining and matching competencies related to credentials to job skill requirements, and making information about those opportunities accessible to students and job-seekers. While many states have already defined pathways for some in-demand occupations, few have been able to connect those pathways to the required or recommended credentials, since information about licenses, certifications, degrees, and other training is often not easily gathered together. The CTDL and Registry allow states to show information about relevant pathways and to connect each occupation to its relevant credentials, empowering residents to navigate their options and more quickly ascertain educational requirements or recommendations.

**Alabama** is using Credential Engine’s technologies to address a number of important goals, including connecting credentials to in-demand career pathways. Alabama has convened a team of stakeholders to define in-demand industries and occupations and develop statewide career pathways. Their “Compendium of Valuable Credentials” will utilize the CTDL and Registry to organize information about credentials and competencies in the state, allowing leaders to define credentials of value in ways that were not possible before due to data silos that existed between different systems and tools. The list will consist of regional and state career pathways and identify which valuable credentials will be mapped to those pathways. In order for education and training providers to be considered for inclusion on this list, they will first need to agree to publish information about the credentials they offer to the Credential Registry.

## **Identifying High Value Credentials for Attainment Goals**

Leaders in almost every state in the nation have set ambitious goals to increase postsecondary credential attainment in their jurisdiction -- but not all states have clearly defined what a quality postsecondary credential is that would count towards those goals. With [nearly 1,000,000 credentials](#) in the United States, policymakers need better information about these credentials to understand the value of both degree and non-degree credentials. Several important initiatives through organizations like the National Skills Coalition and Education Strategy Group have worked with states to define the standards a quality credential should meet. Once those standards are agreed upon within a state, leaders and practitioners need up-to-date, thorough, and comparable information about credentials available in that state to make determinations about which ones count. Without utilizing Credential Engine’s infrastructure, state leaders would have to use multiple, disparate data sources. Credential Engine’s common language and Registry allow states to utilize one data source to analyze information about all credentials and make clear to residents which credentials meet their definition of quality.

In **Ohio**, agencies across the state participated in Education Strategy Group’s Credentials of Value Institute, which is designed to help agencies agree upon metrics for defining quality non-degree credentials and develop strategies to incentivise attainment of these credentials. This work led directly to the development of the Ohio Department of Higher Education’s Tech Cred initiative, which funds quality non-degree credentials related to technology occupations. This initiative relies upon the CTDL and Registry to collect, review, and make transparent information about these credentials.

## **Competencies Aligned to Job Skills**

Competencies conveyed by credentials and their alignment to job skills are more valuable than ever in our world of rapidly changing workforce needs. Credential Engine’s infrastructure enables states, systems, and individual institutions to define the competencies that are conveyed in education and training programs. Linked open data can unlock the power of these alignments by providing a globally unique identifier for each competency and job skill, and connecting this data across technology systems and on the web. Competencies become a currency when their value can be clearly communicated across an ecosystem-- competencies and their connections to courses, programs, occupations, and job skills become actionable, including on the web and in tools and applications. Ultimately, this means that education and training providers are speaking the same language as employers, and can more easily ensure that programs and courses meet local needs.

## Digital, Comprehensive, Interoperable Learning and Employment Records

All individuals should be able to collect and connect information about their education and training histories, to better understand and communicate the skills they've gained, but right now evidence of these experiences is fragmented. Further, the often paper-based renderings of credentials do not show what skills they represent or what a student has learned to earn them. While Credential Engine's technologies do not include individual-level information, technologies such as statewide longitudinal data systems and digital, comprehensive learning records can utilize data from the Registry to connect and make more visible the underpinnings of what a credential represents. Learn more [here](#).



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