



## **Credential Transparency: Linked Data Can Power Better Decisions in States for All Learners**

In the wake of unprecedented labor market uncertainty, state policymakers are searching for ways to help learners find the most efficient and cost-effective pathways to secure the right skills, competencies, and credentials that lead to good jobs. But with nearly 750,000 unique credentials in the U.S., too often learners don't know which credentials lead to desired outcomes, employers are unable to understand what skills workers actually bring to a job, and educators are rushing to keep up with changing requirements in the workplace.

Much like finding and purchasing a car, mapping a route to a store, or browsing for music - all of which are possible through the shared use of common, open data systems on the web - stakeholders are seeking clear alignment between education and work and states play a vital role in uncovering those connections.

### ***What is a Credential?***

Credential Engine uses the term “credential” broadly, including but not necessarily limited to diplomas, badges, certificates, apprenticeships, licenses, certifications, and degrees of all types and levels. These credentials all capture and convey unique sets of competencies (knowledge, skills, and abilities) to signal what a holder is able to do in the education and employment market.

### ***Who is Credential Engine?***

Credential Engine is a national non-profit organization, providing a suite of technologies, services, tools, and expertise to support states to bring about, maintain, and benefit from credential transparency. Our technologies include the common, open language known as the Credential Transparency Description Language (or CTDL), credential and competency publishing tools, an open-source Credential Registry, and structured data for states' use.

Credential Engine's technologies allow for a single, comprehensive source of data on credentials, competencies, quality assurance information, labor market outcomes, pathways, and connections to jobs across all types of credentials and providers, ensuring the broadest coverage - which streamlines data collection, breaks down silos, and ensures the data is accessible and actionable.

The CTDL schema - a living, evolving language - includes over 500 data elements/categories, which allows for the rich description of credentials, competencies, skills, and more. No other linked open data format like it exists.

And the Credential Registry is the largest national repository of the diverse range of credential and competency types and providers - and continues to grow.

### ***How Credential Engine is Working with States:***

States can play a vital role in making credential transparency a reality for millions of learners, nationwide, through a shared usage of common, open, and linked data systems. When data about credentials and competencies is made available in the CTDL and published to the Credential Registry, states can realize the benefits of credential transparency such as:



- *Statewide attainment goals are supported by credential transparency.* By better identifying and sharing which credentials meet quality standards, **Michigan** is on its way to increasing the number of Michiganders with a high-quality postsecondary credential from 45 to 60 percent by 2030.
- *Data systems and strategies can be better connected across the state.* **Alabama** is using Registry data to identify and promote high-value, high-demand, and fast-growing career pathways and credentials of value by connecting - in real-time - to the statewide longitudinal data system.
- *Agencies can use the Credential Registry for eligibility, approval, and evaluation functions.* Several states including **New Jersey, Washington, Illinois, Indiana, and Colorado** are integrating their Eligible Training Providers Lists (ETPLs) with the CTDL and Credential Registry.
- *Credential transparency improves pathway and navigation tools for students and workers.* **New Jersey** will use linked open data to develop a new “decision tool” available to the public at large but designed with and for low-income individuals, customers of state human services programs, and individuals from other disadvantaged populations to make better decisions about their best pathway to education and work.
- *States can enhance transfer, dual credit, and early college initiatives.* **Indiana** is using linked open data to facilitate more transfer of credit across high school, community college, four-year programs, apprenticeships, industry certifications, and licenses.

Nearly twenty states and regions are already partnering with Credential Engine to more effectively harness the power of credential data, promote and implement credential transparency, and build new solutions that connect and innovate the education and workforce space.

#### ***How Credential Engine Operates:***

Credential Engine provides both freely available resources to utilize these technologies and fee-based strategy, project management, and technical services to help states and regions achieve credential transparency and utilize the technologies to meet statewide and regional goals. To take action in your state, contact [erafal@credentialengine.org](mailto:erafal@credentialengine.org) or visit [www.credentialengine.org/services](http://www.credentialengine.org/services).



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