



Making Certification Data Transparent to Advance State Goals

Credential Engine and its growing network of national and [state partners](#) are working together to make lasting, structural change to the way information about education and training opportunities is collected, connected, and shared. With approximately [one million credentials](#) in the United States, it has historically proven challenging to find reliable, trusted, and comparable information about all credentials, including degrees, certificates, badges, apprenticeships, and certifications. With so many to choose from—and until we have consistent adoption of a common standard for comparing and evaluating them—people get lost and lose out on opportunities. [Certifications](#), in particular, are highly valued, but essential information about them is often buried and difficult to find.

Building a linked open data network where all credential data can be accessed, compared, and used in customer-facing pathways and guidance tools is essential. This work reduces barriers to information, ensuring that all individuals have equitable access to the full range of learning, advancement, and meaningful career opportunities. Through use and adoption by federal agencies, states, systems, institutions, industry stakeholders, and developers, the [Credential Transparency Description Language \(CTDL\)](#) and the [Credential Registry](#) have become the standard method to make credential data transparent, linked, open, and interoperable on the web. In fact, the United States Departments of Labor and Education now include requirements in many of their grants to make information about credentials available as linked open data and recommend the use of CTDL.

Credential Transparency and State Goals

State leaders are now ensuring that information about the credentials offered or approved in their state is transparent and made available in order to better inform and support their education and workforce strategies. As states make progress towards their goals, a critical objective is to demonstrate the connections and pathways among credentials. In particular, states are looking to illustrate how education and training opportunities provided by high schools, career and technical education (CTE) programs, private training providers, and postsecondary institutions prepare individuals to successfully obtain industry certifications.

Every state and its education and workforce systems need the same information about certifications, but certification bodies do not uniformly share their data with states. Without a change in this process, states and certification bodies will continue to duplicate efforts on a regular basis—and risk missing out on valuable information about relevant certifications that students, workers, and employers need to make informed decisions.

When information about all credentials—including certifications—is available, states will be able to improve and streamline their efforts to:

- Find and evaluate new certifications that meet their workforce needs.
- Develop clear and navigable educational pathways that include detailed information

about certifications and where to access relevant training.

- Develop Industry Recognized Credentials lists that include rich details about those credentials—and make them publicly accessible.
- Identify and promote training offered in secondary CTE programs and postsecondary institutions that prepare students for certifications—and streamline the way they collect that information from the schools themselves.
- Improve training providers' reporting methods to better show which certifications their programs prepare students for and include that data on Eligible Training Provider Lists.
- Provide additional information about the rigor, value, and industry acceptance of different credentials.
- Improve the talent pipeline by helping employers understand key aspects of certifications and allowing students to more effectively communicate the skills and competencies they have earned.

Take a Step Toward Transparency

Fortunately, many certifications have already been published to the Credential Registry, but many more are still needed. In order to ensure that all certifications are found and connected, credential information needs to be made transparent through Credential Engine's open source Registry. Credential Engine, its [Certification & Licensure Advisory Group](#) (CLAG), and its state partners ask that key information about certifications be made open and available through the Credential Registry. Certification bodies can take action by:

- [Creating an account](#) to publish to the Credential Registry
- Reviewing the [guidance](#) developed by the CLAG
- Publishing information about all certifications offered*

If you have any questions, please contact Scarlett Jeckel, Credential Engine's Accounts and Publishing Coordinator, at sjeckel@credentialengine.org.

*Credential Engine does not collect any personally identifiable information or verify credentials; the Registry captures rich data about credentials themselves such as costs, competencies, and related assessments. For certifications, we recommend publishing benchmark level data found [here](#).



To learn more, please visit www.credentialengine.org or contact jgrann@credentialengine.org