



Prospectus: State Counting Credentials Reports

Industry needs skilled workers to fill in-demand jobs, and states must work with education and training providers to develop those skills more efficiently. To align state investments in education and training more closely with industry demand, states need a better understanding of what programs they are currently investing in and how well they are doing in meeting the needs of a fast-changing economy.

Credential Engine, in partnership with the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness, has produced a series of reports (["Counting U.S. Postsecondary and Secondary Credentials"](#)) that have become the authoritative accounts of the rapidly changing credentialing landscape in the United States.

To help state leaders take stock of available credentials, lay the groundwork for a more transparent credential landscape, provide benchmarks with other states, and guide investments in education and training, Credential Engine and the Center on Regional Economic Competitiveness (CE/CREC, herein) offer to prepare customized, state-specific "Counting Credentials" reports. Creating an inventory of credentials is a [first step](#) toward answering critical questions about the availability of high-quality credentials that link students and job seekers to key industries, key occupations, and key technology areas.

State policy and program leaders seeking to answer questions about the number, attainment, and alignment of credentials in their state are invited to partner with CE/CREC in 2021–2022 to update the national "Counting Credentials" report for their state. While we will build on prior work to keep the costs of this new service as low as possible, a few options are available for further customizing the research. For this initial offering of state-specific reports, we are requesting commitments by November 15, 2021.

Each report will provide updated, state-specific counts for five credential types offered by in-state providers, as outlined in the national "Counting Credentials" report and to be updated in collaboration with state agencies and experts. These credential types include high school diplomas, apprenticeships, licenses, certificates, and degrees. CE/CREC will estimate attainment and earnings levels by credential for specific demographic groups at the state level. Occupation- and industry-specific counts of credentials will be provided as available. (See Report Contents table on the next page for details.)

Core Report Contents

For each state client, CE/CREC will provide a core report with state-level estimates for the five credentials listed in the following table. Data for credentials not listed (such as certifications, badges, boot camp course certificates) are not state-specific, or state-specific information is not easy to access. As described in the Optional Task sections below, we are available to carry out additional research to generate state-specific information on these other credentials.

Credentials Issued by State-Based Institutions	State Count	Occupational Distribution	Industry Distribution	Attainment Rates <i>(by key demographics)</i>	Earnings Estimates <i>(by key demographics)</i>
High School Diplomas	X			X	X
Apprenticeships	X	X	X	X	X
Licenses	X	X	X	X	X
Certificates	X	X	X		
Degrees <i>(Title IV via IPEDS plus others as available)</i>	X	X		X	X

Core Report Production Tasks

Task 1. Brief key state leaders and stakeholders on the scope of work. Facilitate feedback sessions. Refine the plan.

Task 2. Coordinate with state agencies to leverage state administrative data where possible.

Task 3. Prepare initial credential count estimates in five credential categories with industry/sector specifics where possible and attainment/earnings estimates for key demographic groups where possible. Include initial insights and counts from exploratory, value-added research if appropriate.

Task 4. Review the counts of credentials and attainment/earnings estimates with state agencies.

Task 5. Produce final report and attend discussion session and/or report release event.

The budget for this basic state report is: \$50,000.
The timeline is between 3-5 months.

Optional Task A: Greater Detail on the State Credentialing System

CE/CREC expects that this work will raise questions about how state-based institutions and businesses utilize credentials to advance career pathways to in-demand jobs. We are available to conduct advanced exploratory work to assess how state agencies are addressing key questions about the value of various credentials and how we might collaboratively refine and generate detailed, state-level information in one or two of the following areas, which CE/CREC would investigate in consultation with state experts:

- public workforce system training and related credentials in specific sectors;
- public workforce training link to higher education pathways (degree of alignment via credentialing);
- professional credentials associated with higher education and workforce programs;
- provision of online courses by state-based institutions in specific sectors;
- use of badges by state-based institutions in specific sectors; and
- certifications valued by state-based employers in specific sectors.

CE/CREC will conduct exploratory research and provide information and/or estimates in one or two areas that would be of value to the state's policy leaders and state agencies, to be determined in consultation with state agencies. Depending on the above areas of focus identified by your state, this optional Task A may include interviews and review of documentation, reports, data sources, sector-specific data collection with employers and education/training providers, results summary and briefing, and adjustment of credential count research estimates.

The budget for this optional activity is \$25,000. Detailed activities would be developed in consultation with the client.

Optional Task B: Analysis of State Administrative Records

Access to information from state administrative data systems, such as the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), will help to refine the count in many of the credential categories described above. In addition, depending on SLDS capabilities, information from state systems could enhance our understanding of how entry-level credentials, workforce training, and higher education can reinforce or create new pathways to advancement and higher earnings.

Also, it may be helpful to pursue the exploratory, value-add activity of gathering information on training providers operating outside the public education and workforce system and the likely incidence of training provided by employers.

During the project, we can begin to explore the potential for future progress in these areas in dialogue with state experts and develop a work plan for how best to improve and use state administrative data systems to support the state's efforts to track credentialing activities. If state systems are advanced, we can conduct initial data modeling and analysis to answer key research questions.

The budget for this optional activity is \$25,000. Detailed activities would be developed in consultation with the client.

Purchase a Report:

To arrange purchase of a State Report or request further information, contact info@credentialengine.org.