Credential Engine Will Help Advance the Kauffman Foundation's Vision for Real World Learning in Kansas City

Credential Engine will help establish a common understanding of credentials across the Kansas City region through mapping the credential landscape and recommending shared data standards that can equitably guide learners, workers, educators, and employers forward.

October 15, 2021 (Washington, D. C. and Kansas City, MO)—National non-profit Credential Engine will help map the credential landscape in Kansas City and move the region toward credential transparency in support of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation's vision for Real World Learning — a Kansas City community initiative to help prepare the region, students, and employers for the future.

Bringing credential transparency to the Kansas City region is especially meaningful because the local economy spans two states and six counties with disparate data collection methods and no common schema to describe credentials, competencies, and skills. For example, there are almost 20,000 credentials across Kansas and Missouri — including diplomas, certificates, apprenticeships, licenses, and degrees. Without a standard way to understand, compare, and connect credential data, it is nearly impossible for leaders to understand the credential landscape and people cannot navigate their options effectively and efficiently.

The Kauffman Foundation is supporting efforts across the region to ensure students and workers have equitable opportunities to advance. This includes aligning educational opportunities with industry needs and helping students gain "Market Value Assets" — industry-valued and recognized skills acquired in high school that create a more seamless transition from school to postsecondary education and/or the workplace. However, disconnected and inaccessible credential data across local and state systems means that leaders are making decisions without the full breadth of information they need, and learners get lost and lose out on opportunities. Credential Engine will help create a more transparent system that places credential information at the hands of leaders, learners, workers, credential providers, and employers.

"The Kansas Board of Regents has been working toward credential transparency at the post-secondary level," says Dr. Blake Flanders, President and CEO of the Kansas Board of Regents. "This new strand of work in Kansas City will help broaden its impact. Families across the region need access to better credential information so they can find and navigate the paths to high-demand credentials and jobs."

"People are looking for the greatest value for their dollar, and having all the right information about the quality and benefit of the education or training they are considering is important," says Scott Cheney, CEO of Credential Engine. "They don't have time or money to waste, and they want to make their best decision. But they need fair, full, and open data to consider and act on. That's what we're working to make public, and to get it into everyone's hands."

Credential Engine is vested in helping the Midwest reap the benefits of credential transparency as exemplified by its co-leadership of the Midwest Credential Transparency Alliance (MCTA). Credential Engine believes in the common good that a linked open data network that everyone can access for timely and trusted information about credentials can bring. The vision is made real through a common schema — the Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL) — describing all credentials, competencies, providers, quality assurance frameworks, and more. Data in CTDL are then uploaded into an open, accessible, and searchable Credential Registry that everyone can use. A transparent data infrastructure equips everyone with consistent, rich, and timely data about credentials that can support current and future goals.

Credential Engine will work to uncover the different credentials and their associated knowledge, skills, and abilities within the region to create a workable action plan to map these data into CTDL and publish to the Registry. Credential transparency will allow leaders across the Kansas City community to better understand the credential landscape, plan for effective use of the CTDL and Registry across the region, and use these technologies to meet future goals.

If you have any questions about the contents of this press release, want to learn more about our state partnerships, or want to get started with credential transparency, please contact Emilie Rafal, Director of Programs for Credential Engine, at erafal@credentialengine.org.

About Credential Engine:
Credential Engine is a non-profit whose mission is to map the credential landscape with clear and consistent information, fueling the creation of resources that empower people to find the pathways that are best for them. Credential Engine helps with the publishing and use of credential data and offers strategic planning, technical assistance, and project design and implementation services to partners engaging in this work. Credential Engine currently has partnerships with 27 states and regions as well as two regional consortia of states across the U.S. Learn more about Credential Engine at www.credentialengine.org.

About the Kauffman Foundation:
The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation is a private, nonpartisan foundation based in Kansas City, Mo., that seeks to build inclusive prosperity through a prepared workforce and entrepreneur-focused economic development. The Foundation uses its $3 billion in assets to change conditions, address root causes, and breakdown systemic barriers so that all people – regardless of race, gender, or geography — have the opportunity to achieve economic stability, mobility, and prosperity. For more information, visit www.kauffman.org and connect with us at www.twitter.com/kauffmanfdn and www.facebook.com/kauffmanfdn.