



May 25, 2022

The Honorable Robert Scott
Chair, House Committee on Education and
Labor
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member, House Committee on
Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Frederica Wilson
Chair, Subcommittee on Higher Education
and Workforce Investment
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mariannette Miller-Meeks
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Higher
Education and Workforce Investment
United States House of Representatives

Dear Chair Scott, Ranking Member Foxx, Chair Wilson, and Ranking Member Miller-Meeks,

Thank you for your leadership in drafting and introducing the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2022* ([H.R. 7309](#)), legislation to reauthorize the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) of 2014, and enhance America's workforce development system.

With nearly one million credential options—ranging from certificates, badges, apprenticeships, certifications, licenses, degree—and close to \$2 trillion spent annually on education and training in the United States, it is important that stakeholders understand their options and have the information they need to make use of their opportunities and scarce resources, so that:

- Students and workers have the information they need to make their best decisions, avoid unnecessary debt and waste of time, and pursue and secure self-sustaining employment
- Employers understand how different credentials and their competencies relate to the job skills they need fulfilled so they can find and use as many talent pipelines as possible; and
- Education and training providers have the necessary data that helps them fill regional credential needs and open up possibilities for individuals and businesses.

As the nation continues to recover from the pandemic, it is important to put clear and reliable education and training information in users' hands. Otherwise, a lack of access to information exacerbates the skills mismatch between the existing workforce and the needs of employers. The past two years have seen rapid technological changes, historic investments in infrastructure that will require more skilled workers, and a recognition that some types of credentials - like high-quality, targeted short-term training programs - are preferred by adults who want to upskill for new opportunities. Without transparent information, the confusing credential marketplace causes many problems, such as creating and perpetuating inequities by limiting who has access to which data.

WIOA provides critical training and career services that help adults and youth across the country get the skills they need and help employers secure a qualified workforce. State lists of Eligible Training Providers make available appropriate information to assist participants in choosing employment and training activities. This includes measures of the quality of the program or training services that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential, meets the in-demand hiring needs of employers, and the performance outcomes of training programs. Yet, there is wide variation in how states measure quality, what data is made publicly available about credentials, and how individuals can access, compare, and use the information to make data-informed decisions.

Credential Engine, our partners, and supporters are excited to see the proposed changes to make WIOA data more transparent, linked, open, and interoperable using modern data formats that are both accessible to people but also machine actionable on the open web. When data from WIOA performance reports and the Eligible Training Providers List can be easily included in web-based tools and services, it supports the search, discovery, comparison, analysis, navigation, and guidance capabilities necessary to help job-seekers find their best opportunities. It levels the playing field for who has access to information, and it fuels the creation of resources that empower people - including those *not* directly served by federal dollars - to find the pathways that are best for them, their families, and their education and employment goals.

Work on credential transparency is already underway in nearly half of the states and several regions of the country. In fact, in 10 states, lists of Eligible Training Providers are being - or will be soon - published as open data. Open data on credentials allow states to support new exploration, guidance, and navigation tools and services to benefit students, job seekers, workers, employers, and others.

We look forward to continuing to work with federal policymakers to promote and improve credential transparency efforts and appreciate your thoughtful and detailed approach to these improvements. If you have any questions, please contact Scott Cheney, CEO, Credential Engine (scheney@credentialengine.org).

Credential Engine

Advance CTE

Advance Vermont

Data Quality Campaign

Indiana Commission for Higher Education

National Skills Coalition

New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP)