



## 2025 Credential Engine Request for Proposals

### Partnerships for Credential Transparency

Expanding Data as CTDL in the Credential Registry to Support Learners, Workers, Employers, and Others

**Deadline: March 14, 2025**

#### **Background Information**

Through an increasing array of credentials — such as degrees, certificates, licenses, certifications, badges, and apprenticeships — job seekers, students, and workers have more options than ever. Yet, there has never been an efficient system to collect, search, and compare credentials, skills, and pathways in a way that is universally understood. With over 1 million [unique credentials in the U.S. alone](#), this lack of comprehensive information contributes to confusion, often limiting individuals' opportunities and outcomes in the marketplace. [Credential Engine](#) aims to level the playing field and ensure that all individuals have access to high-quality and transparent information about credentials. Through our resources and tools, Credential Engine empowers students, workers, job seekers, employers, educators, policymakers and others to make informed decisions, navigate education and training pathways, and pursue credentials best aligned with their goals.

Credential Engine provides the following web-based tools and services to understand and compare information about credentials:

- The Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL) serves as the common language for how credentials, credentialing organizations, and competencies are described both in the Registry and on the open Web.
- The Credential Registry houses, manages, connects, and shares up-to-date information on all types of credentials in the marketplace. Partners publish their data to the Credential Registry via our Accounts System.

#### **RFP Overview**

Over the next two years, Credential Engine will focus on expanding education and employment information available as linked open data in the Credential Registry to empower all stakeholders with clear, consistent information and to fuel the development of tools and services that use this information to help people make better decisions.



To support the work, Credential Engine was pleased to receive a two-year grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to work with a select group of partners to make information on opportunities for success, job skills, and pathways available as linked-open data. Approximately \$150,000 in funding will be available per year for two years to support sustainable and replicable publishing to the Credential Registry by states, systems, institutions, providers, data owners, or other relevant entities.

A total of approximately \$50,000 will be available in each of the following three categories, or a total of \$150,000:

- Opportunities for Success: Data about credentials, providers, programs, quality, outcomes, costs and financial aid, pathways, and support services that promote equitable outcomes and help students, workers, and others make their most informed decisions. We will work with partners to publish [Tier 1 and Tier 2 data](#) elements that help to create a strong foundation to aid in adopting an opportunity-minded culture to better serve students.
- Job Skills: Data about competencies and skills enhances the visibility of learning opportunities and their alignment with industry needs. This helps learners make informed choices about their education and career pathways and provides a faster hiring process for employers. Linking learning and working more efficiently creates a well-aligned workforce that can attract investment and encourage economic growth. We will help partners improve the connection between the [learning and work ecosystem](#) by publishing data about jobs and skills requirements and describing how they align with competencies gained through education and training.
- Pathways: Clear pathways should connect learners' educational achievements to relevant work opportunities, point to meaningful and fulfilling careers, and enable lifelong learning. Pathways represent progressions towards specific destinations. We will help partners who have existing [learning and career pathways](#) make this information available as linked open data and navigable in tools that help learners achieve their goals.



## **Eligible Applicants**

Proposals may be submitted by any entity that has ownership of or authorization over the data relevant in any one of the categories above. Proposals must include demonstrable commitments to both publish the data called for and to put in place scalable, repeatable, and durable means to keep the data current. Exact arrangements and workflows for publishing will be determined with each grantee.

## **Primary Responsibilities**

*Selected grantees will be responsible for:*

- Developing use cases and plans for using the Credential Registry data.
- Publishing data on opportunities for success, job skills, or pathways data that meet or exceed Credential Engine's [minimum data requirements](#).
- Putting in place scalable, repeatable, and durable means to keep the data current.
- With support from the Credential Engine team, incorporating data from the Credential Registry into *at least* one website, tool or application that benefits stakeholders (e.g., students, learners, administrators, advisors, career coaches, etc.) *and* ensuring data consumption from the Registry is included in future websites, tools, or applications developed for students and learners.
- Participating in regular project meetings.
- Publicizing the project, its value, and specific benefits where and when applicable.

*Credential Engine will provide technical assistance and support to grantees, which may include:*

- Providing technical support for publishing data to the Credential Registry.
- Convening regular progress meetings.
- Assisting with the development of tools and applications that use data from the Credential Registry to empower students and learners.
- Providing communications documents or assisting grantees in developing their own documents

## **Grant Amounts**

Credential Engine will provide a total of up to \$50,000 per year (in each category) for projects in publishing data on opportunities for success, job skills, and pathways data. It is expected that individual grants to projects could range from \$5,000 to \$15,000 for a defined grant period. Funds may be used to assist with meeting costs, data/software costs, new tool/application development costs, staffing assistance, and other costs related to supporting this work. Grantees may have the opportunity to apply for a second year of funding upon successful completion of the first grant period.



### **Proposal Submission Information**

Submit a project narrative (up to 1,000 words) for funding assistance that describes the following items:

- Identify your priority use cases for data on opportunities for success, job skills, or pathway data and how you would use such data from the Credential Registry. Include information about the relevant audience (ie., students, career counselors, employers), how the Registry data will solve current and future problems, and plans for implementation.
- Detail key credentialing organizations, higher education systems, and other entities who you anticipate participating in this project. Include any relevant information about your relationships with those institutions and systems.
- Provide a sense of the scale and scope of the data to be published. (For example, 10 micro-credential pathways, each with 2-3 micro-credentials; data on opportunities for success for the 10 community colleges in our district; job skills data for 10 employers in an industry sector in our region.)
- Indicate the method(s) you would employ to inventory the relevant data on opportunities for success, job skills, or pathway information to be published, and any known databases or repositories of the data that might be used.
- Describe plans for sustaining the availability of and easy access to transparent data on opportunities for success, job skills, or pathway data and how such data will be used in tools and services to meet the needs of relevant consumers of this data.
- Outline a brief timeline of the project.
- Add information about any additional related initiatives.

Provide a proposed budget, including a short narrative describing how the funding will be used.

### **Subgrant / Contract Provisions**

These grants will be structured as pay-for-performance agreements. No more than 10% will be available upon signing of the agreement, with additional payments made upon completion of deliverables, and the final payment made upon implementation and proof of a sustainable and repeatable publishing process.

### **How to Apply**

Submit proposals to [info@credentialengine.org](mailto:info@credentialengine.org) by March 14, 2025. Applicants are encouraged to forward questions to Rachel Vilsack, [rvilsack@credentialengine.org](mailto:rvilsack@credentialengine.org).