

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

(WIOA) Desk Reference

Certificate vs. Certification

Overview

This resource highlights the distinction between a **Certificate** and **Certification**. This information is intended to assist grantees in collecting and reporting data for the Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) and Credential Attainment WIOA performance indicators.

Certificate

- **Completion-based** and denote participation in a defined course of study.
- Example of a **certificate** that would count towards the Credential Attainment indicator is a Registered Apprenticeship Program **Certificate** of Completion.
- Certificates that do not meet the standard of a **recognized** credential:
 - Are often related to discrete skills within one or more industries or occupations (e.g., writing, leadership, etc.).
 - May have value and are occasionally required, but they typically do not prepare individuals with the competencies required to perform a specific occupation.
 - Include **certificates** for discrete skills such as general hygiene (handwashing), general safety, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), work readiness, and food handling **certificates**.

Certification

- Attest to attainment of competence through a comprehensive **examination or demonstration** and may also have a work experience requirement.
- Usually considered to be more rigorous and indicate a higher level of competence or proficiency than a certificate.
- Examples: Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) **Certification**, Amazon Web Services (AWS) **Certification**

