



Request, Update and Recommendations Provided to the
Workforce Information Advisory Council (WIAC)
Regarding America's Workforce and Labor Market Information System (WLMIS)
August 2021



The WIAC should investigate, understand, and report to the Secretary of Labor on the opportunities, value, efficiencies and equitable benefits to USDOL, job seekers, employers, and providers of the use of common, open, linked and interoperable data schema across the entire education, training and workforce development credentials and competencies market.

Since 2017 Credential Engine has been facilitating and coordinating the building of a linked, open, interoperable data network that everyone can access for timely and trusted information about credentials, qualifications, competencies, skills, quality, transfer, pathways, outcomes, links to jobs, and more.

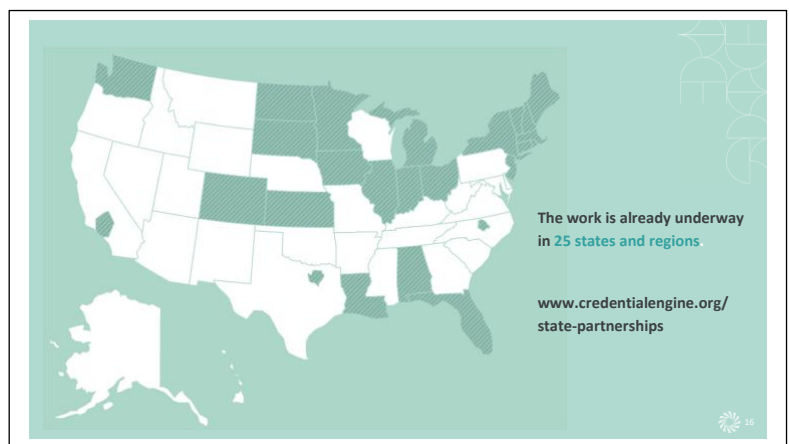
This work is vital because the credential ecosystem in the United States is large, complex, and confusing. In the U.S. alone, there are:

- 967,734+ unique credentials, *defined to include diplomas, badges, microcredentials, certificates, certifications, apprenticeships, licenses, qualifications, and degrees of all types and levels;*
- Hundreds of thousands of competency frameworks and models for those credentials, industries and occupations;
- Well over 50,000 providers of credentials nationally;
- Close to \$2t spent on education and training annually;
- Various and unclear quality assurance entities, standards and public utility

Before Credential Engine was founded by the Lumina Foundation, JPMorganChase, and the Business Roundtable there was no common language to describe, search for, or compare credentials and competencies, quality and outcomes, pathways and stackability, alignment with industries, occupations and job skills, and the like. No other linked open data format like it exists. The Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL) is recognized as the standard language to make credentials discoverable, understandable, comparable, and navigable.

As of this update, 23 states, two multi-state regions through cooperation with two of the four Regional Compacts (NEBHE and MHEC), and three sub-state regions are actively engaged in bring transparency to their credential ecosystems. This number will grow to include over half the states and more regions by the end of 2021.

With widespread adoption of linked, open data and the credential transparency description language, including through the formal backing of federal agencies, people will be able to make their most informed decisions and pursue their best opportunities.



The Departments of Labor, Education, Commerce and Defense have been leaders to date. The Department of Labor has coordinated the availability of O*NET and its many industry competency frameworks as linked, open data using CTDL. This allows education and training providers to dynamically link their credentials and competencies to the specific knowledge, skills and abilities

associated with industries and occupations. The Department of Commerce’s National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) has done the same with its CyberSecurity competency framework (NICE).

The Departments of Labor and Education have been included credential transparency requirements through the use of linked, open data in various of their competitive grant opportunities. Currently the Employment and Training Administration includes the following in its grant requirements:

DOL Standard Language for Credential Transparency in FOAs:

The Department wishes to ensure that individuals, employers, educators and training providers have access to the most complete, current and beneficial information about providers, programs credentials, and competencies supported with these public, federal funds. To this end, the Department requires that information about all credentials (including but not limited to diplomas, badges, certificates, certifications, apprenticeships, licenses, and degrees of all levels and types) and competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) developed or delivered through the use of these public federal funds be made publicly accessible through the use of linked open data formats that support full transparency and interoperability, such as through the use of credential transparency description language specifications. ETA will provide specific guidance and technical assistance on data elements to include in the published open data, such as information about the credential provider, the credential and its associated competencies, delivery mode, geographic coverage, the industry sector(s) and occupation(s) for which the credential was developed, related assessments, related accreditations or other quality assurances where appropriate, costs, and available outcomes.

States are using linked, open data and the CTDL for a wide variety of uses, including making public their entire Eligible Training Provider Lists (ETPLs), quality indicators across all credentials, building comprehensive repositories of all credentials in their state, including credential data in pathway and navigation tools, training explorer tools, digital diplomas and learning and employment records (LERs), and return-on-investment tools, to name some examples. One example is provided for illustration.

Alabama uses linked open data to accomplish goals

Problem State	Use of Credential Transparency and Linked, Open Data	Progress and Outcomes
<p>Alabama did not have consistent, rich data about all credentials in the state to implement these goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and signaling credentials of value • Developing navigable education and career pathways • Building a “digital backpack” so residents can collect information about their earned credentials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize CTDL to standardize the way credentials are described • Developed a publishing workflow and minimum data policy tailored to state needs • Make data available in Registry as linked open data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a consistent way to collect and connect data about credentials in the state • Can more easily connect Registry data to other data sources • Have up-to-date data to make real-time decisions about what programs to fund • Can connect to and learn from what other states are doing

<https://credentialengine.org/success-stories/alabama/>

Credential Engine Recommendations:

1. DOL should continue to include the above language in all ETA grants related to workforce development, training, credentialing, and jobs.
2. DOL should expand the use of this language across all the Department’s grantmaking opportunities to include all competitive funding related to credentials and competencies, including all offices, bureaus, divisions, and agencies.
3. DOL should incorporate through guidance and regulations the use of linked, open data through the CTDL for the collection, availability, aggregation, reporting and assessment of credential, competency, provider, quality, outcome and other related information associated with Eligible Training Provider Lists (ETPLs) across the country and at DOL.
4. DOL should provide incentive funds and technical assistance to states to support their adoption, implementation, and use of linked open data for credentials, competencies, providers, and related essential information.

Credential Engine is ready and interested in being an expert resource to the WIAC and DOL.