

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO)

Credential Attainment – Fact Sheet

DOL uses program data to measure performance; and REO grantees are charged with increasing the credential attainment rate, a **WIOA primary indicator of performance**, among job seekers. Yet identifying relevant credentials in a local area may be overwhelming. Credential Engine (<https://credentialengine.org>) identifies hundreds of thousands of credentials, for example.

Which credentials count for the WIOA performance indicator—credential attainment?

For a credential to meet the WIOA definition it must be in recognition of measureable technical or industry/occupational skills. To make determinations on which credentials to select, we prefer that you use the tools available on the credential attainment resource page, including the credential attainment decision tool. The links to both are below:

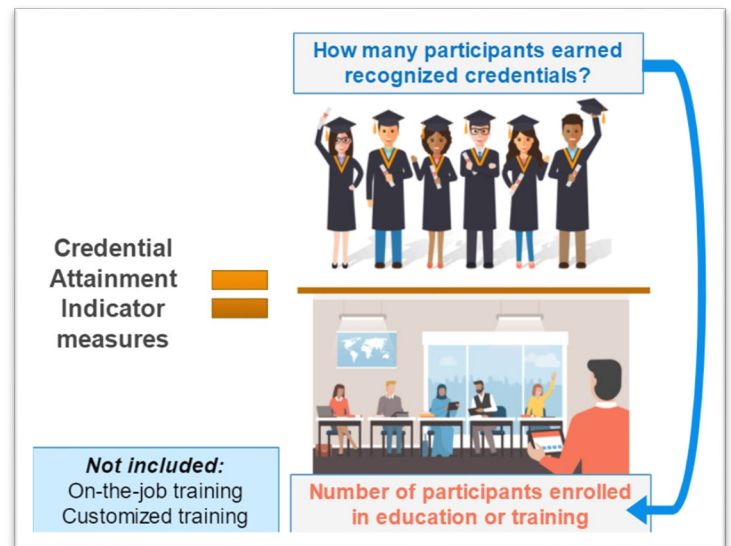
- ◆ <https://performancereporting.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/12/18/18/43/Credential-Attainment-Resource-Page>
- ◆ <https://wioacredentialtool.safalapps.com/>

The Employment & Training Administration (ETA) is unable to provide grantees determinations as to whether specific credentials meet the WIOA definition in TEGL 10-16, Change 1, due to the volume of both new and existing credentials, and inability to rule on each one.

What is the technical definition of WIOA credential attainment?

Credential Attainment is the percentage of participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in on-the-job training and customized training) who earn a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program (see 20 CFR sec. 677.155(a)(1)(v)).

Additionally, if the credential attained was a secondary school diploma or equivalent, then that participant must be in education/training leading to a postsecondary credential or employed within one year after exit for the credential to count.



The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Does the credential result in measurable technical or industry/occupational skills that prepare participants for entry into or advancement in a specific industry/occupation?

- REO funds can be used to provide training in *general skills* such as work readiness or safety, but those certifications (even if they are broadly required in an industry) typically are not counted toward the WIOA Credential Attainment.
- Many entities award credentials that count toward Credential Attainment; key factors for industry and occupational certifications are rigorous preparation and testing in multiple competencies required for a *specific occupation*. Those competencies should be developed or endorsed by employers or industry associations.
- Ideally, the occupational or technical skills are in-demand locally or regionally.

Examples of In-demand Industry/Occupational Certifications

IT	Transportation	Business	Construction
• Microsoft Certified IT Professional • Cloud Computing	• Major Collision Repair & Refinishing • Auto Repair Master Certificate	• Certified Manager • Business Marketing	• LEED Green Associate • Certified Door Consultant



CONSIDERATIONS FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED PARTICIPANTS

Recidivism Exclusion Rule: Enrolled participants who are re-incarcerated and unable to complete their intended services during the performance period must be documented. These individuals should be exited for this reason, and excluded from all calculations of the five WIOA primary indicators of performance (i.e. employment/education in both 2nd quarter and 4th quarter after exit (youth and adult), median earnings, credential attainment, and measurable skills gains.) However, these individuals remain in the numerator and denominator for the recidivism rate performance reporting.

Collateral Consequences in Credentialing: There is no uniform standard that applies to consideration of criminal record in occupational licensing, though many licensing agencies apply a “direct relationship” standard. Navigating the collateral consequences that may limit occupational licensing opportunities (such as a Commercial Driver’s License) can be daunting even when applicable laws and regulations are clear about what types of criminal records may be disqualifying. However, when license eligibility depends upon whether an applicant possesses “good moral character,” the impact of an applicant’s criminal record is often unclear. A good approach is to research the occupation of interest and, if licensing laws are unclear, inquire whether a criminal record would be disqualifying to the licensing agency prior to beginning training. Federal law disqualifies individuals with certain convictions from employment in the banking and transportation sectors, and in a wide variety of state-licensed jobs in healthcare and education.

Nonetheless, many changes are occurring in terms of collateral consequences in employment and occupational licensing. Since 2015, 33 states have eased or eliminated licensing barriers for people with criminal records. In 2019, Congress passed the Fair Chance Act prohibiting employers in all three branches of the federal government and private-sector



The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

federal contractors from asking about job applicants' arrest and conviction record until a conditional offer of employment has been extended, an approach that has become known as "ban the box." Relevant information is also cited in the database of selected licensed occupations provided by the National Conference of State Legislatures at:

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/occupational-licensing-statute-database.aspx>.

3 COMMON TYPES OF POST-SECONDARY CREDENTIALS

Occupational License is a credential awarded by a government agency that constitutes legal authority to do a specific job. Licenses are based on some combination of degree or certificate attainment, certifications, assessments, or work experience; are time-limited; and must be renewed periodically.

- ◆ Database of Detailed Information on Selected State Licenses: <https://ncsl.org/stateslicense>
- ◆ CareerOneStop searchable database of all federal and state occupational licenses (with links): <https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Training/find-licenses.aspx>



Occupational/Industry-recognized Certification is generally granted by non-government agencies, and indicates that the individual has acquired the necessary competencies (including knowledge, skills, and sometimes, personal attributes) to perform a specific occupation. It's based on successful completion of an examination or assessment, which indicates mastery of competencies as measured against a defensible set of standards.

- ◆ CareerOneStop searchable database of Certifications: <https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Training/find-certifications.aspx>
- ◆ Department of Defense- Civilian Credential site: <https://www.cool.osd.mil/dciv/>

Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally-recognized credential. <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/apprenticeship-finder>

SOME CERTIFICATES ARE NOT CONSIDERED CREDENTIALS



Professional and industry associations award some occupational certificates that do **not** qualify as WIOA Credentials. Some differences between the two are related to their rigor:

- Certificates are often **completion-based**—awarded after participating in a defined course of study. In contrast, WIOA Credential Attainment generally involves assessments and/or tests, and may require hands-on tests or work experience.
- Certificates are often skill-based and apply across many occupations or industries (e.g. general hygiene, general construction safety, food-handling, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), leadership, and work readiness). In contrast, WIOA Credentials involve gaining proficiency in many competencies required for a specific occupation or industry. For more details see TEGL 10-16, Change 1.

FIND TRAINING THAT LEADS TO CREDENTIALS HERE:

- ◆ ETA's Local Training Finder: <https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Training/find-local-training.aspx>



EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



WIOA Desk Reference

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Page | 3

What characteristics should I look for in credentials?

- 1) **Industry-Recognized** credentials are either: developed and offered by, or endorsed by a nationally or regionally-recognized industry association, or organization representing a sizeable portion of the industry sector; *or* sought or accepted by companies within the industry sector for purposes of hiring or recruitment.
- 2) **Stackable** credentials are part of a sequence that can build an individual's qualifications and help them move along a career pathway or ladder to new and potentially higher-paying jobs.
- 3) **Portable** credentials are recognized and accepted as verifying the qualifications of an individual in other settings including: location, other educational institutions, or other industries or businesses.
- 4) **Accreditation** by an independent, quality-review body is a valuable attribute, and is often required for educational institutions where students receive Federal financial aid. Some valuable credentials offered by industry or professional associations, or by product vendors, may not be accredited, so it's important to look for additional markers of quality or labor market value, such as professional acceptance or local demand. The CareerOneStop Certification Finder includes such indicators in job-postings.

