

ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM
Department of Commerce
Workforce Development Division
401 Adams Avenue
Post Office Box 304103
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-4103

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Credentials Policy

GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE INNOVATION DIRECTIVE NO. PY2021-02

1. Purpose. This directive transmits the State's policy regarding the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Credentials for Adults and Dislocated Workers and Youth. This policy defines a credential, provides examples of allowable credentials, and addresses the credential performance measure.
2. Discussion. The credentials policy has been updated. Credentials policy reflects the effort of the Governor's Initiatives of Success Plus and the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP). The ACCCP is responsible for aligning credentials with the in-demand occupations and provide consistency for recognizing a valuable credential. WIOA establishes the criteria for credentials that can be included in performance. This policy explains what a credential for the purposes of WIOA performance.
3. Action. It is the responsibility of the local workforce development areas, program operators, and training providers to review and comply with the attached credentials policy. Please retain for future reference and ensure all program operators are aware of this policy.
4. Contact. Any questions regarding this Directive should be addressed to Donna Rowe or Glenda Alexander, Workforce Development Division, at donna.rowe@commerce.alabama.gov or glenda.alexander@commerce.alabama.gov.

Tammy Wilkinson

Tammy Wilkinson (Jun 14, 2021 14:23 CDT)

Tammy Wilkinson, Division Director
Workforce Development Division

Attachments:

- 1: Alabama's WIOA Credentials Policy

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Credentials Policy

Overview

Credentials are an important part of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for Adults, Youth and Dislocated Workers and training for WIOA-eligible individuals should result in attainment of credentials. As part of the focus on credentials, WIOA will be supporting the Governor's Initiatives that focus on the registry and attainment of credentials. Success Plus Initiative set the statewide attainment goal of adding 500,000 postsecondary credentialed individuals to Alabama's workforce by 2025. It stresses the importance of attaining credentials of value to meet the demands of the employers and their jobs. The Governor established the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) and its technical advisory committees which are composed of business and industry members representing each sector. The ACCCP is responsible for determining the valuable career pathways in each region and for evaluating credentials. Once the credentials are included on the Alabama Credential Registry, the ACCCP reviews the credential against the ACCCP's credential quality assurance criteria. Once the ACCCP approves the credentials, they are included on the Alabama Compendium of Valuable Credentials and would be potentially acceptable for the WIOA credential measure.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) emphasizes credentials for Adults and Dislocated Workers. For Adults and Dislocated Workers, earning a credential has been defined as "obtaining a recognized postsecondary credential or diploma during program participation or within one year after program exit".

The Youth credential performance measure has been changed for WIOA; Youth have a year after exit in which a credential can be recorded. In addition, a Diploma/GED will be counted only if the participant is either employed or enrolled in a training program leading to a postsecondary credential within one (1) year after exit.

Training & Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 10-16, change 1 established criteria in which a credential is to be awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or occupational skills. These technical or occupational skills are generally based on standards developed or endorsed by employers in order to allow the participant to:

- Enter Employment
- Re-enter Employment
- Retain Employment
- Advance within an Occupation

Credentials include:

- Postsecondary Degrees
- Diplomas
- GEDs
- Licenses
- Industry-Recognized Certifications
- Registered Apprenticeship Credentials

❖ What are Credentials?

Credentials are an important element of the workforce development system. Ideally, obtaining a credential indicates an individual has mastered competencies and knowledge relevant in the labor market. Credentials are normally issued to the individual by a third party (e.g. educational institution, an industry/occupational certifying organization, or professional society), which has authority to issue such a credential. Credentials must be Industry-recognized, stackable and portable post-secondary credentials at a minimum. Alabama has developed a system through the ACCCP to evaluate and categorize credentials as follows:

1. The credential is either **required by law**, including any credential mandated by the laws or regulations of the State of Alabama or the United States of America; **mandated by industry**, which shall include any credential mandated by two (2) or more firms within an industry sector; or **preferred by industry**, which shall include any credential endorsed, but not required, by two or more firms within an industry sector.
2. The credential is **required to obtain a job** (counts toward attainment goal and is an advanced credential on the compendium of valuable credentials); **part of a stackable sequence** leading to a credential that is required for employment (included on the compendium of valuable credentials as a basic credential, but these credentials do not count towards the attainment goal); **complementary credentials** with skills that are affiliated with the career pathway but are not directly aligned to the credential sequence (can be included on the compendium of valuable credentials as a complementary credential but are not included in credential sequences and do not count towards the attainment goal) complementary credentials are non-qualifying credentials;
3. **Accredited or recognized** by a statewide or national industry-recognized accrediting body, such as a sector or industry association;
4. **Aligned to an occupation** on a regional or statewide list of in-demand occupations;
5. **Achievable by students** in a secondary and/or the postsecondary level of study;
6. **Earned after a minimum number of hours of instruction time**, as determined by the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways, and awarded after achieving a passing score, as determined by the sponsoring industry sector, on a proctored examination;
7. **Stackable in a sequence** of aligned competencies that progress along with the rigor of advanced training programs;

8. **Valuable** as determined by leading to at least a twenty (20)-percent wage premium over a high school diploma;
9. **Traceable and trackable** by the ATLAS on Career Pathways as determined by the Office of Education and Workforce Statistics;
10. **Portable across or within an industry sector** to establish the qualifications of individuals in multiple geographic areas, among multiple education and training institutions, and by diverse employers.

❖ **Types of Credentials**

Credentials come in many different forms and are issued by a wide variety of entities. Credentials are either degree or non-degree credentials.

Degree credentials are issued by accredited educational institution, which is most often the designer of the credential and the developer of the associated curriculum. These are typically portable throughout the country. Examples include:

- Educational Diplomas/Certificates (Secondary School Diploma/equivalent)
- Educational Degrees (Associate/Bachelor's degree)

Non-Degree Credentials include:

- Occupational License, Industry Certifications, Certificates, and Registered Apprenticeship Credentials. Includes:
 - Registered Apprenticeship Credentials—Issued by the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship
 - Non-Degree Certificates
 - Occupational license—Typically, but not always, awarded by government entities before an individual is allowed to be employed in a trade, profession, or occupation. Licenses are intended to set professional standards and ensure safety and quality of work.

Industry-Recognized or Professional Association Certification—Issued by 3rd party, non-governmental organizations based on standards set to demonstrate professional qualifications and/or competencies.

❖ **Recognized Postsecondary Credential**

A recognized postsecondary credential is awarded based on a participant's attainment of measurable technical or industry/occupation skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an industry/occupation. These technical skills or industry/occupational skills generally are based on standards developed or endorsed by employers or industry associations.

Note: Complementary credentials do not meet the definition of a recognized postsecondary credential and are non-qualifying credentials.

- Stand-alone Work Readiness certificates do not meet this definition
- General Skills related to Safety, Hygiene, etc. do not meet the definition due to the fact these certificates are broadly required to qualify for entry-level employment.

A recognized postsecondary credential must recognize industry/occupational skills for a specific industry or occupation and must be registered and listed on the Alabama Credential Registry beginning July 1, 2021.

❖ **Credential Issuing Entities**

There is a wide array of public and private credential issuing entities and organizations. They can be grouped into three general categories:

1. Government
2. Educational Institutions
3. Businesses, Non-Educational non-profits, and Industry Associations

❖ **Examples of Non-Qualifying Credentials**

Non-qualifying credentials will not be counted toward performance. However, such credentials can be of value to participants as a building block for educational and/or occupational success.

Single Skill Certificates - General and Single Skill certificates in and of themselves do not provide the depth of knowledge necessary to provide a significant advantage to the job seeker, thus would not meet the spirit of the credential measure.

Certificates of Attendance - Certificates of Attendance/Completion and/or Participation do not reflect demonstration or attainment of industry knowledge, skills, or attributes; thus, do not meet the spirit of the credential measure.

Work Readiness - It is the expectation that participation in workforce development should enhance the Work Readiness of all clients. These types of certificates do not tie to technical or occupational skills within an occupation. Work Readiness certificates do not meet the spirit of the credential measure.

High School Certificate of Completion/Attendance - A high school certificate of attendance indicates the student has completed high school but did not demonstrate mastery of required skills. It is not the same as a High School Diploma. High School Attendance certificate does not meet the spirit of the credential measure.

This list addresses the most common non-qualifying credentials but is not all inclusive.

Credential Type	Example
General/Single Skill	CPR First Aid OSHA Job Safety training ServSafe food safety Standard driver's license Work Key Certificate
Certificate of Attendance/ Completion/Participation	Conference Attendance Certificate
Work Readiness	JAG competency certificate Work Readiness Credential
Workforce Development Board	Certificates awarded
High School Certificate of Attendance	

❖ **Credential Performance Measure**

A Credential will count in performance as a positive outcome if it falls within one of the following categories.

- High School Diploma/or Equivalency
- AA or AS Diploma/Degree
- BA or BS Diploma/Degree
- Post Graduate Degree
- Occupational Skills Licensure
- Occupational Skills Certificate
- Other Recognized Diploma, Degree or Certificate
- Non-Degree certificates
- Registered Apprenticeship Credentials

The Credential performance measure is calculated in the following manner:

$$\frac{\text{\# of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent** during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program}}{\text{divided by}}$$

of program exiters who were in postsecondary education /training program; plus the # of program exiters in a secondary education program (at or above the 9th grade level) without a high school diploma or equivalent

Note: Secondary School Diploma/Equivalent Diploma will only count as a “positive” outcome if the participant is either employed or enrolled in a training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within 1 year after exit from the program.

This measure allows a one-year delay following Exit for the outcome to be Attained and recorded into Alabama Works! thus the importance of FOLLOW-UP.

NOTE: When recording the date, the Degree/Certificate or Credential was attained, use the **date indicated on the** degree, certificate or credential.

The Workforce Development Division will determine whether a Provider issued certificate is an allowable credential for performance purposes.

❖ Summary

Credentials must have “*measurable*” technical or occupational skills associated with them; must have labor market value. A qualifying credential provides documentation of education and/or technical or occupational skills necessary *to gain employment or advance within an occupation*. Credentials must provide a valuable return on investment for our workforce system customers. Qualifying credentials must be registered and listed on the Alabama Credential Registry at www.credentials.ache.edu beginning July 1, 2021.

❖ Resources

- www.accs.cc/career-technical-education: Alabama Community College System Career and Technical Education Credential and Certification Listing
- www.doleta.gov/performance/guidance: Department of Labor performance site as well as search engine for pertinent TEGL’s.
- www.GoCertify.com: IT certification resource center.
- www.microsoft.com/en-us/learning: Demonstrate knowledge and abilities to use Excel, Outlook, Word and other Microsoft Office applications.
- www.careeronestop.org/competencymodel: Competency model clearinghouse. Industry competency initiative.
- www.workforce3one.org: A database of workforce curriculum, competency models, research findings, case studies and web-based tools.
- www.careerinfonet.org/certifications: A directory of certifications that allows user to search for by keyword, industry or occupation.

- www2.labor.alabama.gov/WorkforceDev: The Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways information.
- www.credentials.ache.edu: The Alabama Credential Registry is a statewide registry to inventory and publish credentials.

Additional explanation of performance calculation

Postsecondary Credential

Date which a participant attains a Credential occurs during participation in, or within 1 year after Program Exit AND The type of Credential attained is recognized as a postsecondary credential

DIVIDED BY

Date of Program Exit is within the timeframe being reported, except those that exit with exclusions AND the participant has at least one type of training service in which the participant was enrolled is considered “Postsecondary” OR

The participant participated in postsecondary education

Secondary Credential

The date which the participant attains a credential occurs during participation in, or within 1 year after Program Exit AND

The type of credential attained is recognized as a Secondary School Diploma/or Equivalency AND

The participant enrolls in a post exit education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within 1 year after program exit OR

The participant is employed within one year after program exit

DIVIDED BY

Date of Program Exit is within the timeframe being reported, except those that exit with exclusions AND

At least one type of training service in which the participant was enrolled is considered “Secondary” OR

The participant was “Enrolled in Secondary Education Program at Program Entry”