



PRIORITIZING HIGH-VALUE INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS

Model Policy

ExcelinEd Policy Toolkit - 2020

This document contains a model policy for the creation of a process to identify and collect data on the attainment of high-value industry-recognized credentials. [Download this model policy as an editable Microsoft Word document.](#)

SUMMARY

The purpose of this model policy is to establish a cross-agency, cross-sector leadership council to prioritize the industry-recognized credentials that offer students (and employers) the skills to succeed in state and regional labor markets. This policy: codifies a process to review, align and update the high-value credentials offered across K-12, postsecondary and workforce agencies; sets consistent expectations for data collection and reporting on attainment of credentials across education systems; and promotes the stackability of high-value industry-recognized credentials through the articulation of these credentials to college credits for approved postsecondary credentials.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

This model policy is designed to be adopted either in its entirety or by adding language from specific sections to existing state policy. For example, states could add the data collection and reporting sections to existing policy related to industry-recognized credentials. Additionally, states may want to consider the following model policies which support quality and alignment across state's education-to-workforce system:

- [Annual Review of CTE Offerings](#)
- [Building Cross-Sector Partnerships](#)
- [Industry Credential Incentive](#)

MODEL POLICY - HIGH-VALUE INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS

Be it Enacted by the Legislature of the *[state]*:

Section 1: Definitions

- A. As used in this section, the terms have the following meanings:
- “Industry-recognized credential” means a voluntary process through which students are assessed by an independent, third-party certifying entity using predetermined standards for knowledge, skills, and competencies, resulting in the award of a credential that is recognized by employers in the state, nationally or internationally.
 - “High-value industry-recognized credential” means an industry-recognized credential that meets the criteria determined by the *[name of approving body]*, which must include (but is not limited to):
 - Wages of aligned occupation(s)
 - Demand (current and projected) of aligned occupation(s)
 - Skill-level of aligned occupation(s)
 - “*[State]* High-Value Industry-Recognized Credential Council” means the council established under this act.
 - “High-Value Industry-Recognized Credential List” means the list of high-value industry-recognized credentials that is annually approved by the High-Value Industry-Recognized Credential Council under this act.
 - “Postsecondary” means all formal education institutions and programs leading to bachelor’s degrees, associate’s degrees, industry-valued certificates and diplomas, or other sub-bachelors/sub-associates licenses and credentials.



Section 2: [State] High-Value Industry-Recognized Credential Council

Note: If the state is establishing a new cross-sector council to oversee the state's high-value industry-recognized credentials, delete section (2.D). If the state is directing an existing entity to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of the High-Value Industry-Recognized Credential Council, delete sections 2.A-C and replace "High-Value Industry-Recognized Credential Council" with that entity name throughout the model policy.

- A. The [State] High-Value Industry-Recognized Credential Council (the Council) is hereby established and directed to provide leadership, strategic direction and evaluation of the state's investments in and progress toward industry-recognized credential attainment that supports individual students' and the state's current and future economic prosperity.
- B. *[Customize membership for specific state context and stakeholders.]* The Council shall include members from the following stakeholder groups, who reflect [state's] diversity in terms of geography, priority industry sectors, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability and other appropriate special populations.
 - a. These representatives shall serve as standing, voting members of the Council:
 - i. Heads, or designees, of state agencies, such as education, higher education, labor/workforce, economic and community development, and statewide longitudinal data system.
 - b. These representatives shall be appointed by [appointer name] for staggered, rotating 3-year terms as voting members of the council, except for the student representative(s) who shall serve a 1-year term:
 - i. Employers representing at least three (3) of the state's priority industry sectors
 - ii. Industry associations/chambers of commerce
 - iii. Regional economic development and workforce investment boards
 - iv. Local government officials
 - v. Educators (K-12 and postsecondary)
 - vi. Students and recent graduates (K-12 and postsecondary)
 - vii. Parents (K-12 and postsecondary)
- C. The Council shall be chaired by [title, agency/entity] and [agency/title] will provide administrative support.
- D. *[Optional: if selected, delete 2.A-C.]* The [entity name] is directed to provide leadership, strategic direction and evaluation of the state's prioritization of investments in, and progress toward, industry-recognized credential attainment that supports individual students' and [state's] current and future economic prosperity.
- E. The Council collectively, and each (Council) member within the bounds of his/her authority and influence, shall:
 - a. Identify the state agencies that support education and/or training programs that lead to, include, or otherwise align with industry-recognized credentials. Within each identified agency, identify:
 - i. The data system(s) and position(s) responsible for coordinating the collection and reporting of industry-recognized credential attainment data within secondary, postsecondary, and/or workforce development agencies; and
 - ii. The funding streams and amounts supporting each education and/or training program.
 - b. Align and annually review statewide industry-recognized credential data collection and reporting expectations, business rules, and processes to support consistent credential attainment data collection and transparent reporting across all education systems and agencies;
 - c. Align policy, guidance, initiatives, and communications with the High-Value Industry-Recognized Credential List;
 - d. Enact cross-agency policies that provide for statewide articulation of high-value industry-recognized credentials. This policy (or set of policies) should include secondary-postsecondary articulation as well as articulation across various postsecondary and workforce systems;
 - e. Actively seek engagement and feedback from stakeholders involved with—and impacted by—industry-recognized credentials in the state; and
 - f. Annually report on the state's high-value credential attainment and data collection processes.



Section 3: Identifying High-Value Industry-Recognized Credentials

- A. By *[date]*, the Council shall develop a process and criteria to annually review, approve, and publish the state's High-Value Industry-Recognized Credential List.¹ The Council shall:
- a. Establish statewide definitions that describe different types of industry-recognized credentials that:
 - i. Define the types of industry-recognized credentials available in (state);
 - ii. Differentiates across credential type² and credential level³—which can be used to determine how credentials align with content standards across K-12, postsecondary, and workforce programs; and
 - iii. Communicate whether and how each type of credential is used in hiring, promotion, and wage decisions.
 - b. Establish a process and criteria to determine statewide and regional priority occupations that includes:
 - i. Methodology, criteria, and thresholds that determine low-, middle-, and high-demand occupations;
 - ii. Methodology, criteria, and thresholds that determine low-, middle-, and high-skill occupations;
 - iii. Methodology, criteria, and thresholds that determine low, middle- and high-wage occupations; and
 - iv. Methodology, criteria and thresholds that identify emerging occupations.
 - c. Establish a process and criteria to annually review, identify, and approve *[state's]* High-Value Industry-Recognized Credential List based on the Council's defined criteria for priority occupations. This process shall include:
 - i. Methodology, criteria, and/or thresholds to identify the credentials most valued by state employers for each priority occupation (where applicable) using labor market information (LMI);
 - ii. A process to engage employers and industry associations to review and provide feedback on the value of the credentials identified by the LMI analysis;
 - iii. Verification of industry-recognized credentials' alignment with secondary, postsecondary, and/or workforce program content, with consideration of requirements that may inhibit student attainment (e.g., age-based or experience-based requirements for K-12 students);
 - iv. Identification of which industry-recognized credentials demonstrate mastery at secondary and postsecondary levels;
 - v. Engagement and feedback from stakeholders involved with—and impacted by—industry-recognized credentials in the state; and
 - vi. A process for stakeholders to submit industry-recognized credentials for review and inclusion on the state's High-Value Industry-Recognized Credential List.
 - d. The High-Value Industry-Recognized Credential List shall be approved and published annually on or before *[date]*. If the industry-recognized credentials identified on the List are not substantially the same as those occupations identified in the prior year, the Council and appropriate member agencies shall provide reasonable notice of the changes to education systems and institutions.
 - e. Annually on or before *[date]* the *[agency of education]* and *[agency of higher education]*, in collaboration with *[agency of workforce development]*, other appropriate state agencies and business/industry must sign and publish articulation agreements that outline the postsecondary credits and program content/requirements met by students who earn each high-value industry-recognized credential for prior learning, transfer, and course placement purposes.
 - f. Annually on or before *[date]*, each member agency will publish and communicate the High-Value Industry-Recognized Credential List and articulation opportunities to students, prospective students, families, educators, and community members.

¹ [Building Credential Currency Toolkit](#) (Education Strategy Group) provides a strong framework for this work.

² Examples include Licenses, Certifications, Software, General Career Readiness, CTE Assessments, etc.

³ Examples include building block, stackable, skill mastery, etc.



Section 4: Data Collection

- A. The Council shall align and annually review statewide industry-recognized credential data collection and reporting expectations, business rules, and processes to support consistent credential attainment data collection and transparent reporting across all education systems and agencies. These expectations and processes should ensure student-level, industry-recognized credential attainment data can be:
 - a. Integrated into state secondary, postsecondary, and longitudinal data systems to evaluate program and credential equity and impact; and
 - b. Leveraged to analyze the return on investment analysis by matching industry-recognized credential attainment data with postsecondary completion, employment/placement, and wage data.
- B. All state agencies that support education and/or training programs that lead to, include, or otherwise align with industry-recognized credentials shall collect student-level data that includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Students who enrolled in each career and technical education course or program, postsecondary program, or other workforce training program that leads to or aligns with each high-value industry-recognized credential;
 - b. Students who attempted each high-value industry-recognized credential;
 - c. Students who earned each high-value industry-recognized credential;
 - d. Students who attempted or earned each industry-recognized credential that is not identified as “high-value”;
 - e. Students who were awarded postsecondary credit for industry-recognized credentials through articulation or transfer agreements;
 - f. Demographic (race, gender, family income, disability, home language, etc.), geographic, and course/program enrollment information that allow industry-recognized credential attempts and attainment to be disaggregated by student group, program, career cluster, district, school, postsecondary institution and other important factors;
 - g. Other data elements determined by the Council; and
 - h. Assurance that all data collected aligns with the expectations, business rules and reporting processes outlined by the Council.
- C. All state agencies that support education and/or training programs that lead to, include, or otherwise align with [state’s] high-value industry-recognized credentials shall strive to enact data-sharing agreements with the credentialing entities of those credentials identified as high-value, to the extent possible, that:
 - a. Comply with FERPA and other applicable state and federal laws governing student records and privacy;
 - b. Provide information on student credential exam attempts, raw scores, subsection scores, and other available information related to student performance and mastery;
 - c. Provide sufficient student information to match credentialing information with other components of student records;
 - d. Increase efficiency by entering into statewide data-sharing agreements that span secondary and postsecondary systems and students;
 - e. Collaborate with other states in negotiating consistent data-sharing agreements with credentialing entities to increase administrative efficiency and data consistency; and
 - f. Align information collected from students or candidates as part of the credentialing process with state agency data systems to allow for better matching within student and longitudinal information systems.

Section 5: Reporting

- A. On or before [date] of each year, the Council (in partnership with all member and any other appropriate agencies) shall submit a report to the Governor, the [President of the Senate], and the [Speaker of the House of Representatives] on items that shall include, but are not limited to:
 - a. The number of students who enrolled in each career and technical education course or program, postsecondary program, or other workforce training program that leads to or aligns with each high-value industry-recognized credential;



- b. The number of students who attempted a high-value industry-recognized credential by credential, program and career cluster;
 - c. The number of students who earned a high-value industry-recognized credential by credential, program and career cluster;
 - d. The number of students who earned an industry-recognized credential that is not identified as “high-value” by credential, program, and career cluster;
 - e. The number of students who were awarded postsecondary credit for industry-recognized credentials through articulation and/or transfer agreements;
 - f. Disaggregated demographic data on the students who earned a high-value industry-recognized credential, including the high-value industry-recognized credentials earned by the groups and characteristics listed in *[Part 4.B(e) of this section]*;
 - g. The source of data for each credential, including a list of credentials for which the agencies acquire student attempt and/or attainment data through direct agreements with the credentialing entity; and
 - h. Additional items as requested.
- B. The Council shall annually publish this report for digital distribution and all member agencies shall make the full report, and relevant information therein, accessible to their stakeholders including students and families, educators, employers, and community members.

Section 6:

The Act becomes effective _____.