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

August 23, 2016

GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE INNOVATION DIRECTIVE NO. PY2016-02

SUBJECT: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Credentials Policy

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. Under WIOA, Adults and Dislocated Worker funding streams are now subject to a credential performance measure. For Adults and Dislocated Workers, 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 changed for WIOA; youth now have a year in which a credential can be attained and recorded. Under WIA, the timeframe was 9 months to capture the credential. In addition, a diploma/GED will only be counted if the participant is either employed or enrolled in a training program leading to a postsecondary credential within one (1) year after exit.

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 Tammy Wilkinson, Workforce Development Division, at (334) 242-5154.

Steve Walkley, Division Director
Workforce Development Division

Attachments:
1: Alabama's WIOA Credentials Policy

WIOA CREDENTIALS POLICY
Guidelines

❖ Overview

WIOA has reintroduced credentials for Adults and Dislocated Workers as a performance measure. For Adults and Dislocated Workers, 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 changed for WIOA; Youth now have a year in which a credential can be recorded (for WIA it was 9 months). In addition, a Diploma/GED will be counted as a "positive" outcome *only* if the participant is either employed or enrolled in a training program leading to a postsecondary credential within 1 year after exit.

The U.S. Department of Labor provided guidance on Credentials via TEGL No. 15-10, "Increasing Credential, Degree, and Certificate Attainment", issued December 15, 2010. This TEGL is still in active status; and thus, it will remain pertinent for WIOA.

The TEGL 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

Credential is the 'catch-all' term used to encompass:

- Postsecondary Degrees
- Diplomas
- GEDs
- Licenses
- Industry-Recognized Certifications

❖ 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.

Ask yourself the following questions when determining if a course of study or curriculum will lead to a Credential:

- ✓ Is the credential *Industry recognized*?
- ✓ Is the credential *Stackable*?
- ✓ Is the credential *Portable*?

Industry-Recognized - Developed and offered by, or endorsed by a nationally-recognized industry association or organization representing the industry sector, or a credential that is sought or accepted by companies within the industry sector for purposes of hiring.

Stackable - Part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to enhance an individual's qualifications and assist in moving up a chosen career ladder and higher paying jobs.

Portable - A credential is considered portable when it is recognized and accepted in other geographic areas, at other educational institutions, by other industries or companies, or in different labor markets.

❖ Types of Credentials

Credentials come in many different forms and are issued by a wide variety of entities. Various credentials have different characteristics and determining the value of specific credentials can be a challenge.

Examples include:

- Educational Diplomas/Certificates
- Educational Degrees (Associate/Bachelor degree)
- Registered Apprenticeship Certificate
- Occupational Licenses
- Industry-recognized or professional association certifications
- Other certificates of skills completion

Educational Diploma/Certificate/Degree: 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.

Registered Apprenticeship Certificates: These certificates signify completion of—or interim steps within—registered apprenticeship programs. After an individual completes an apprenticeship, they may pursue additional certification from another entity (e.g. in many construction occupations –plumber, electrician; in order to practice that occupation, they must also be licensed).

Occupational Skills 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.

Other Certificates of Skill Completion: A broad and less defined category that tends to focus on credentials that capture narrow competencies and/or knowledge. May be issued after an individual attends or participates in a particular course.

❖ **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

The following are examples of credential issuing entities:

Government

- Program approved by the VA to offer education benefits to veterans
- ETA's Office of Apprenticeship
- Job Corps issued certificates
- A public regulatory agency, upon an individual's fulfillment of educational work experience or skill requirements that are legally necessary for an individual to use an occupational or professional title or to practice an occupation or profession (e.g. Federal Aviation Administration aviation mechanic license)

Educational Institutions

- A state educational agency responsible for administering vocational and technical education
- An institution of higher education that is eligible to participate in federal student financial aid programs.

Businesses/Non-Profits/Associations

- A professional, industry, or employer organization (e.g. National Institute for Metalworking, National Institute for Automotive Service)
- A Product manufacturer or developer (e.g. Microsoft Certified Database Administrator, Certified Novell Engineer)

❖ Examples of Allowable Credentials

These examples should assist in determining whether or not a certain credential meets the USDOL definition of "allowable credentials". This list is inclusive; all qualifying credentials must fit into one of the categories.

Credential Type	Entity	Example
Diploma/Degree	Accredited Educational institution	H.S. diploma/GED AA/BS Degree
Advanced Training Certificate	Postsecondary Institution Professional Associations	Bookkeeper, HVAC Office Administration
Industry-Recognized	Professional Associations Employer Associations	Software Applications Automotive Service
Occupational License	Typically issued by government Agencies	CDL, Cosmetology/Barber EMT, CNA, LPN, RN
Apprenticeship	State Apprenticeship Office	Carpenter, Electrician, Pipefitter, Plumber
Other Certificates	Varies	Dept. of VA approved Job Corps issued

❖ 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 spirt of the credential measure.

Work Readiness - It is the expectation that participation in workforce development should enhance the Work Readiness of all clients. These type 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.

Industry/Employer Certificates - Are awarded based on short-term training in areas such as safety, that are important to the workplace however they are not an occupational or technical skill. Certificates in First Aid, CPR, OSHA training or ServSafe food safety training do not by themselves meet DOL requirements/standards. These certificates are valuable assets for any individual, but, do not represent a full well-rounded set of career skills, and are not likely to be a key to hiring or promotion decisions.

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

In order to get 'credit' for a Credential; the following outcomes are the only positive outcomes that will be recognized:

- 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

The Credential performance measure is calculated in the following manner:

# 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

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

** 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 AlaWorks; 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.

❖ Summary

Credentials must have "*measurable*" technical or occupational skills associated with them. A qualifying credential provides the participant with 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.

➢ Credentials *must* have labor market value!

❖ **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.etpl.alabama.gov: Contains links to websites that offer a variety of free online learning and training courses.
- 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.