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| Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program Policy #111 |

**Subject: Measurable Skill Gains**

**Effective Date: April 9, 2024**

**Revised: n/a**

**CREDENTIALS:**

Credential Attainment is the percentage of participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training) who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program; thus, the significance of WIOA Follow-up Services.

Youth participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent are included in the percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent only if the participant also is employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.

For each core program, a description of who is considered to be enrolled in an ‘education or training program’, and therefore included in the credential attainment indicator, includes:

* **Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker:** All Adult and Dislocated Worker program participants who were enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in an OJT or Customized Training) are included in the credential attainment indicator.
* **Title I Youth:**
  + In-school Youth (ISY): All ISY are included in the credential attainment indicator due to attending secondary or postsecondary school.
  + Out-of-school Youth (OSY): Only OSY who participate in one of the following are included in the credential attainment indicator:
    - Program element of Occupational Skills Training (OST)
    - Secondary (high school) education at or above 9th-grade level during participation
    - Postsecondary education during participation
    - Title II Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) funded at or above 9th-grade level;
    - YouthBuild during participation
    - Job Corps during participation

**RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS:**

A recognized postsecondary credential is awarded in recognition of an individual'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. Neither certificates awarded by workforce development boards (WDBs), nor work readiness certificates, are included in this definition because neither type of certificate documents the measurable technical or industry/occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation. Likewise, such certificates must recognize technological or industry/occupational skills for the specific industry/occupational rather than general skills related to safety, hygiene, etc., even if such general skills certificates are broadly required to qualify for entry-level employment or advancement in employment.

**RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS ARE AWARDED BY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENTITIES INCLUDING:**

* A state education agency, or a state agency responsible for administering vocational and technical education within a state;
* An institution of higher education described in Section 102 of the Higher Education Act (20 USC 1002) that is qualified to participate in the student financial assistance programs authorized by Title IV of that Act. Including community colleges, proprietary schools, and all other institutions of higher education that are eligible to participate in federal student financial aid programs;
* A professional, industry, or employer organization (AWS for welding) using a valid and reliable assessment of an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities;
* ETA’s Office of Apprenticeship or a State Apprenticeship Agency;
* 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;
* A program that has been approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer education benefits to veterans and other eligible persons;
* Institutions of higher education that are formally controlled, or have been formally sanctioned or chartered by, the governing body of Tribes; and
* Job Corps.

**TYPES OF SECONDARY/POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS:**

* Secondary (high school) school diploma or recognized equivalent;
* Associate’s degree;
* Bachelor’s degree;
* Occupational licensure;
* Occupational certificates (including Registered Apprenticeship and Career and Technical Education educational certificates);
* Occupational certification; and
* Other recognized certificates of industry/occupational skills completion are sufficient to qualify for entry-level or advancement in employment.

**CERTIFICATES VS CERTIFICATIONS:**

* Certificates are completion-based and denote participation in a defined course of study and are typically not eligible to be counted towards the credential attainment indicator since they do not prepare individuals with the competencies required to perform a specific occupation.
* Certifications attest to the attainment of competence through a rigorous examination or demonstration and may also have a work experience requirement.

**CREDENTIAL DOCUMENTATION:**

*Acceptable documentation includes:*

* Data crossmatch
* Copy of credential (e.g., a certificate from obtaining a license or degree)
* Copy of school record (e.g., year-end transcripts with the ‘Date Conferred’)
* Case notes documenting information obtained from education or training provider (letter or email from education or training provider must be uploaded in SDWORKS)

**DATA ENTRY:**

The program Operator must enter all credentials into the VaWC system under the Credential section of the participant record. Once the credential is in the participant's record, the credential verification will need to be uploaded into the VaWC system. As with all documentation entered into the VaWC system, the program operator should complete all data entry within 14 days of receiving the documentation.