Elevating the Visibility, Relevance, and Value of Certifications

A Call to Action

Current State of the Workforce
Civilian Unemployment Rate

Percent


Aug. 2020: 8.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
More than 55 Million Americans Filed for Unemployment Benefits

Source: https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/claims.asp
1/3 of individuals in the workforce believe they will need additional education and skills to find comparable employment if they lose their job.

35% of adults are planning to change careers if they lose their jobs

Some College, No Degree

36 million people hold some postsecondary education and training, but did not complete and are no longer enrolled

Source: National Student Clearinghouse: https://nscresearchcenter.org/some-college-no-degree-2019
Certifications in the Current State of the Workforce

• The pandemic has created an economic and social divide that disproportionately affects workers in industries that may not bounce back to previous employment levels.
• Certifications can assist workers in finding jobs.
• There is an opportunity for certification bodies to help both individuals and employers.
The Role of Certifications
Credentialing Ecosystems

- Badges
- Micro-Credentials
- Certificates
- Continuing Education
- Degrees
- Certifications
The Certification Community Often Acts as a Planet Unto Itself
Value of Certifications

Workers with certifications are more likely to see their job as a career [54%] than those without certification [37%]

Workers with certifications are more likely than those without certifications to say they are expected to be creative or innovative in their jobs [58% versus 43%]
Adults Without a Degree Who Hold a Certificate or Certification

- Have higher full-time employment rates than their peers with no credentials (85% versus 78%).
- Have a median annual income of $45,000, compared to $30,000 for those without a credential.
- Perceive their education paths as more valuable and are more likely to recommend them to others than are those without a credential.
What Workforce Issues Should the Certification Community be Paying Attention to?

- Confusion about terminology
- Equity
- Fast pathways to employment
- Unbundling of credentials
- Regionally accepted credentials
- Employability and soft skills
- Upskilling
- On-going and systemic feedback from employers
- Digital Credentials
- Stackable Credentials
Key Workcred Research Projects
Demonstrating Value of Industry Credentials

Workcred is engaging certification bodies around the value of linking their data

• There is no complete, centralized source of administrative data on the outcomes or impacts of certifications

• Certifications are not understood by policymakers, funders of research, state officials, consumers of certifications, and education and training providers

• There is a need to understand the role of certifications in credentialing pathways, including the impact on wages, which will help the certification bodies serve their clients better
How the Industry Certification and Education Performance Data System Works

The Industry Certification and Education Performance Data System works by collecting and analyzing data from various sources to provide insights into the effectiveness of different programs. This system connects with organizations such as the National Association of Manufacturers, Manufacturing Skill Standard Council (MSSC), American Welding Society (AWS), and others, to aggregate and track student-level credential information, education outcomes, and aggregate wage outcomes for credential programs. The system also integrates with colleges and states to gather course/credit information and student level credential information, providing a comprehensive view of how different programs perform across the country.
Examples of Insights Gained by Linking Data Sets:

Student level education outcomes for certification holders:
- Degree attainment, including award date, degree title and major, and institution awarding
- Enrollment status in Title-IV education institutions

Aggregate education outcomes for cohort of certification holders:
- Highest degree or any degree attained by percentages
- Institution type by previous enrollment
- Top 5 Classification of Instructional Programs (CIPs)

Aggregate labor market outcomes since last credential:
- Average wages since last credential overall and by demographics, such as, gender, race and ethnicity, and age groups, and credential attainment level
- Average wages by credential pathway progression
- Entrance and retention in industry sector after credential is awarded
In follow up to the first report in 2018, Workcred and partners are now conducting a research study to better quantify the return on investment of credentials in manufacturing.

The project will result in a better understanding of how credentials can serve as an important resource in identifying skilled workers.
Creating New Pathways at Community Colleges

• Partnering with the League for Innovation in the Community College, the Higher Learning Commission, and the National Student Clearinghouse, Workcred will support the development of 10 certification-degree pathways in community colleges by embedding certifications into associate degree programs in IT, logistics, and health science.

• These pathways will support first-generation, low-income, and adult learners in earning these credentials and entering the workforce.
Creating New Pathways at Community Colleges
Continued

• Currently, the project team is selecting the five community colleges that will work over the next three years to launch two new certification and degree pathways and enroll up to 200 learners.

• Workcred and its partners will also develop tools for efficient and effective replication of scaling of certification and degree pathways at community colleges.

• The project will also collect metrics to evaluate the impact of these pathways on learner education and workforce outcomes.
• One major action principle from the paper related to the certification community:

• HLC will broaden and expand the scope of quality assurance, particularly with regard to non-degree credentials provided by traditional higher education institutions and other providers outside the higher education ecosystem. **This approach recognizes that important learning also occurs outside traditional higher education institutions.**
The Future is Now
A Call to Action!

Join the Workcred projects

Work with colleges and universities

Reach out to industry beyond the job analysis

Establish relationships with state officials

Apply to be on states’ eligible training provider lists
Questions?
For More Information

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