



Montana Department of LABOR & INDUSTRY

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2 **Division: Workforce Services Division**
3 **Category: WIOA**
4 **Effective Date: TBD**
5 **Last Revised: N/A**
6 **Policy No.: TBD**

7 **Credentials Policy**

8 **Background:** The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has put into place a Credential Attainment
9 indicator for Title I, Title II, and Title IV programs. Credential Attainment is the percentage of those clients
10 enrolled in an education or training program (excluding OJT and Customized Training) who attained a
11 recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during
12 participation in or within one year after exit from the program.

13 A client who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is included in the percentage
14 of clients who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent only if the client also is
15 employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential
16 within one year after exit from the program.

17 **Scope:** This policy applies to all service providers operating WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and/or Youth,
18 WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated and Youth program manager(s), WIOA fiscal officers and the WIOA monitoring
19 team. This policy is effective (*insert date upon SWIB approval.*)

20 **Policy:**

- 21 • All training services must be clearly identified and expectations for earning of a credential must be
22 stated in the client's Individual Service Strategy, Individual Employment Plan, Individualized Plan for
23 Employment, or PEP Talk. The client must understand that once training begins, he or she is expected to
24 complete all requirements and program personnel must not report a credential if the client failed to
25 complete the entire program.

26 **Credentials:**

- 27 • **Credential:** This indicator measures attainment of two types of credentials:
 - 28 ○ Recognized postsecondary credential
 - 29 ○ Secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent
- 30 • **Recognized Postsecondary Credentials** are defined as a credential consisting of:
 - 31 ○ Industry-recognized certificate or certification;
 - 32 ○ Certificate of completion of an apprenticeship;
 - 33 ○ License recognized by the State or Federal government;
 - 34 ○ Associate or baccalaureate degree; and
 - 35 ○ Graduate degrees for purposes of the VR program.
- 36 • A recognized postsecondary credential is awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of
37 measurable technical or industry/occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within
38 an industry/occupation. These technical or industry/occupational skills generally are based on
39 standards developed or endorsed by businesses or industry associations.

- 1 • Certificates must recognize technology or industry/occupational skills for the specific
- 2 industry/occupation rather than general skills related to safety, hygiene, etc., even if such general skills
- 3 certificates are broadly required to qualify for entry-level employment or advancement in employment.
- 4 • Examples of recognized postsecondary credentials that meet the definition:
 - 5 ○ Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) License
 - 6 ▪ Example of Occupational License
 - 7 ○ Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Certification
 - 8 ▪ Example of Occupational Certificate
 - 9 ○ Certificate of Completion of a Registered Apprenticeship Program
 - 10 ▪ Example of Occupational Certificate
 - 11 ○ Associates of Applied Science Degree in Diesel Technology
 - 12 ▪ Example of Associates Degree
 - 13 ○ National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) Certification
 - 14 ▪ Example of Occupational Certificate
 - 15 ○ Massage or Cosmetology License
 - 16 ▪ Example of Occupational License

17 **Entities Issuing Postsecondary Credentials:**

- 18 • Public and Private Entities that issue postsecondary credentials:
- 19 • State educational agency or a State agency responsible for administering vocational and technical
- 20 education within a State;
- 21 • An institution of higher education described in the Section 102 of the Higher Education Act that is
- 22 qualified to participate in the student financial assistance programs authorized by Title IV of the act.
- 23 This includes community colleges, proprietary schools, and all other institutions of higher education that
- 24 are eligible to participate in federal student financial aid programs;
- 25 • An institution of higher education that is formally controlled, or has been formally sanctioned or
- 26 chartered, by the governing body of an Indian tribe or tribes;
- 27 • A professional, industry, or business organization (e.g., National Institute for Automotive Service
- 28 Excellence certification, National Institute for Metalworking Skills Inc., Machining Level 1 credential) or
- 29 product manufacturer or developer, (e.g., recognized Microsoft Information Technology certificates,
- 30 such as Microsoft Certified IT Professional, Certified Novell Engineer, a Sun Certified Java Programmer,
- 31 etc.) using a valid and reliable assessment of an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities;
- 32 • State Registered Apprenticeship Agency or ETA's Office of Apprenticeship;
- 33 • A public regulatory agency, which awards a credential upon an individual's fulfillment of educational,
- 34 work experience, or skill requirements that are legally necessary for an individual to use an occupational
- 35 or professional title or to practice an occupation or profession (e.g., Federal Aviation Administration
- 36 aviation mechanic license, or State-licensed asbestos inspector);
- 37 • A program that has been approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer education benefits to
- 38 veterans and other eligible persons; and
- 39 • Job Corps, which issues certificates for completing career training programs that are based on industry
- 40 skills standards and certification requirements.

41 **Recognized Secondary School Diploma or its Recognized Equivalent:**

- 42 • Credential attainment performance indicator is a secondary school diploma that is recognized by a
- 43 State and that is included for accountability purposes under the Elementary and Secondary Education
- 44 Act of 1965 as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A secondary school equivalency
- 45 certification signifies that a student has completed the requirements of a high school education.
- 46 Examples of secondary school diplomas, alternate diplomas, and recognized equivalents recognized by
- 47 the States include:
 - 48 ○ Obtaining certification of attaining passing scores on a State-recognized high school equivalency
 - 49 test;

- 1 ○ Earning secondary school diplomas, alternate diplomas, and recognized equivalent through a
- 2 credit bearing secondary education program sanctioned by State law, code or regulation
- 3 (applies to WIOA Title I and IV only);
- 4 ○ Obtaining certification of passing a State recognized competency-based assessment (Applies to
- 5 WIOA Title I and IV only);
- 6 ○ Completion of a specified number of college credits (Applies to WIOA Title I and IV only).
- 7 • Documentation: Program personnel shall obtain a copy of the certificate (diploma, certificate, school
- 8 letters, license or school transcript that indicates degree attained, etc.) and place the document in the
- 9 client's file. School letters must have the client's name and actual date of graduation.

10 **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

- 11 • A formal monitoring will be conducted on an annual basis by the entity designated by SWIB.

12 **References:**

- 13 • [Performance Accountability Guidance for WIOA - TEGL 10-16, Change 1](#)