



## Request for Proposals

### 2018 State Publishing Strategies to Credential Engine's Credential Registry

Extended Deadline: March 16, 2018

#### **Background**

Through an increasing array of credentials—such as degrees, certificates, licenses, certifications, badges, and apprenticeships—job seekers, students, and workers have more options than ever. Yet, there has never been an efficient system to collect, search, and compare credentials in a way that keeps pace with the speed of change in the 21st century and is universally understood. With more than 300,000 unique credentials in the U.S. alone, this lack of information contributes to confusion and uninformed decision making. Credential Engine is demystifying the credential marketplace by bringing both transparency and common understanding to credentials for the first time to provide information needed to make better credentialing decisions and reveal credentialing and labor trends.

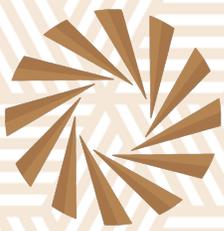
Credential Engine grew out of the Credential Transparency Initiative (CTI), which began in 2013. CTI's mission was to research and initiate the development of a centralized registry of credential information, a common credentialing language, and a credential search engine. This effort was led by the George Washington University's Institute of Public Policy (GWIPP), Workcred—an affiliate of the American National Standards Institute—and Southern Illinois University (SIU) Carbondale's Center for Workforce Development with support from the Lumina Foundation.

Credential Engine was formally founded in December 2016 to operationalize the work of CTI and is supported by Lumina Foundation, JPMorgan Chase & Co., and Microsoft.

Credential Engine provides the following web-based tools and services to find, understand, and compare information about credentials in a user-friendly format:

- The voluntary Credential Registry collects, maintains, and connects up-to-date information on all types of credentials in the marketplace.
- The Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL) provides the “rules of the road” for how credentials, credentialing organizations, quality assurance information, and competencies are described both in the Registry and on the Web.
- The Open Applications Marketplace allows organizations to build customized applications that use the Registry's data to access tailored credentialing information for many different user groups.

More information can be found at [www.credentialengine.org](http://www.credentialengine.org), and you can find out how credentialing organizations, employers, and others might use the data at <http://www.credentialengine.org/articles/documents>. You may also search credentials that have been published on the Credential Registry, and consider the range of information collected about credentials, by visiting Credential Finder ([www.credentialfinder.org](http://www.credentialfinder.org)).



## **RFP Overview**

Credential Engine is working to scale the publishing of credential information to the Credential Registry. Currently, we have formal working relationships with two states—Indiana and New Jersey—that are working to publish credentials to the Registry.

An estimated two states will be selected for assistance through this RFP, though additional states may be selected if more funding becomes available.

Through this RFP, Credential Engine will support additional state initiatives that best address four major goals:

1. Identify and operationalize the use of information from the Registry that allow states and stakeholders to improve services, practices, programs, and policies for the benefit of students, workers, veterans, employers, educators, policymakers and others to make more informed decisions in the marketplace of credentials;
2. Significantly advance our mission of publishing all credentials to the Registry, while recognizing that it may be preferable and more feasible in the pursuit of this goal for states to identify a set of targeted industry sectors to focus on initially, with the aim of expanding to other sectors and all credentials over time;
3. Collect and match longitudinal wage, employment, and employer preference information to these credentials within the state, to the greatest extent possible; and
4. To best ensure long-term data quality and sustainability, establish and maintain systems that allow credential providers to publish their credential data to the Credential Registry using an API, or through direct JSON-LD open-link data formats.

## **Eligible Applicants:**

Proposals may come from a single state agency, a group of state agencies working together, or an organization that has established relationships with state institutions (internal or external to the state).

Credential Engine will consider only one proposal per state.

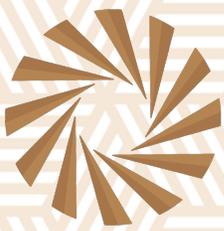
Regardless of the structure of the request, all selected grantees will be responsible for working with individual institutions and entities providing the identified credentials in the state to coordinate the publication of credentials.

It is important for the applicant to note that each provider of credentials—such as, but not necessarily limited to, community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, certification bodies, licensing boards, employers, and apprenticeship programs—will be required to have an approved account with Credential Engine and either publish their credentials directly, or grant approval to the grantee to publish on its behalf.

## **Primary Responsibilities:**

Selected grantees for these state initiatives will be responsible for:

- Developing use cases—the specific ways that the data and technology may be used—and plans for using the Registry data within the state. This might include linkages to labor market demand, return on investment data, and others.



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- Identifying credential providers and credentials within the sector(s) selected (e.g., healthcare, manufacturing, cybersecurity, IT) and identifying the connections between credentials, such as stackability and prior credit information.
- Work with employers, agencies, and existing data collection efforts to include wage, return on investment, and employer preference information where feasible.
- Coordinating outreach to institutions and organizations awarding credentials in the state to explain the project and the state's involvement, and to onboard them by either having them publish directly or give the state rights to publish on their behalf—
  - Ensuring that all identified credentials are published and meet [minimum data requirements](#).
  - Encouraging institutions and organizations to publish additional credentials, as applicable.
  - To the greatest extent possible, using the publishing assistant API.
  - Collecting and documenting systems and databases that house similar information (i.e., course catalogues) and working with the Credential Engine team to incorporate them into the publishing process, as appropriate.
- Outreach to national credentialing organizations that have connections to the credentials published within the state that are not already on the Registry, working with other state initiatives where appropriate.
- Work with Credential Engine team to develop parameters for a state-specific widget or search application that would help demonstrate use cases specific to the state's needs.
- Participate in regular state team meetings (conference calls), and communicate any issues to Credential Engine team for troubleshooting.
- Publicize the project where and when applicable.

Credential Engine will provide technical assistance and support to grantees, which may include:

- Helping with outreach plans, and involvement with outreach as needed.
- Providing communications documents and helping state communications staff develop their own documents for outreach.
- Providing technical support for onboarding of institutions/organizations and for publishing data to the Registry.
- Convening regular progress meetings with state team.
- Convening working groups of all states to discuss best practices and troubleshoot issues.
- Assisting with the development of applications and services that use data from the Credential Registry to improve programs, services, and policies within the state.
- Assisting with supporting collaborative learning opportunities across all state partners.

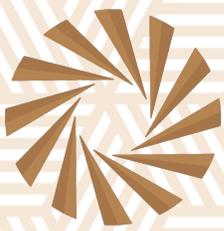
## **Grant Amounts**

Credential Engine will provide 12-month grants between \$30,000 and \$50,000 based on the scope of the project. All grants have a 50 percent matching requirement, which can consist of financial or in-kind resources, that is intended to help grantees leverage additional support for their work. Funds may be used to assist with meeting costs, data/software costs, staffing assistance, and other costs related to supporting this work.

## **Proposal Submission Information**

### **Project Narrative (Up to 2,500 Words)**

Submit a narrative request for assistance that describes the following items:



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- Identify 3–5 use cases for the Registry specific to your state, and how you would use the Registry. Include information about the relevant audience (e.g., students, career counselors, employers), how the Registry data will solve current and future problems, and plans for implementing. Examples of use cases can be found [here](#). Describe additional expected outcomes for your state, including an estimated number of credentials published to the registry and the partnerships strengthened or developed.
- If applicable, describe the industry sectors your project will focus on initially. You may choose one or more industry sectors. Please also include details about why the sector(s) are important in your state. Also, describe plans for how you might eventually publish all credentials in your state. For each sector, identify the institutions and organizations that provide credentials, and the estimated number of credentials across all providers in each sector.
  - Note: Credential Engine seeks credentials from all providers and all types of credentials. To that end, we are seeking to fund proposals able to successfully engage:
    - Providers: High schools/school districts, community colleges, four-year colleges and universities (public, private, for-profit), licensing bodies, certification bodies, badging organizations, apprenticeships (registered and unregistered), and any other credentialing organization.
    - Credential Types: diplomas, badges, certificates, licenses, certifications, microcredentials, degrees (two- and four-year degrees, masters, doctorates), and any other credential type.
- Detail key credentialing organizations and higher education systems in your state. Include any relevant information about your agency’s relationships with those institutions and systems and what your outreach methods would be to engage them in publishing to the Registry.
- Describe your outreach plan to credentialing organizations, how you will work with them to publish their credentials, the publishing methods that are feasible, and any obstacles you might face in getting them to publish.
- Indicate the method(s) you would employ to inventory the relevant credentials to be published, and any known databases or repositories of the data that might be used such as the statewide longitudinal data system.
- Describe any databases, initiatives, or relationships to organizations that will help you gather and publish wage and employment data.
- Provide brief bios for the key staff that will lead this work.
- Add any additional related initiatives.

## **Budget (Up to 500 words)**

Provide a proposed budget of up to \$50,000, with an additional 50% in matching funding from other sources. Include with your budget a short narrative describing how the funding will be used.

## **How to Apply**

Submit proposals to [info@credentialengine.org](mailto:info@credentialengine.org) by **March 16, 2018** with the subject “Credential Engine State Publishing RFP.” Applicants are encouraged to forward questions to Emilie Rafal at [erafal@credentialengine.org](mailto:erafal@credentialengine.org).