



ARKANSAS WORKFORCE CENTERS
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**EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE
ISSUANCE PY 03-02**

Jane English, Executive Director

October 21, 2003

TO: Workforce Centers, Area Operations Chiefs, Local Office Managers and
Satellite Office Supervisors

SUBJECT: WIA Credential and Certification Policy

1. **Purpose:** To provide technical guidance and clarification regarding the attainment of credentials for adults, dislocated workers, and older youth.
2. **General Information:** Of the seventeen current performance measures mandated by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in Section 136, three address the attainment of credentials for adults, dislocated workers, and older youth. The United States Department of Labor's (DOL) Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 7-99, defines "credential" in very broad terms, and delegates to States the responsibility to define specifically which items will be allowed to count toward this measure.

In TEGL 7-99, the DOL defines the term "credential" as follows:

Credential –nationally recognized degree or certificate or State/locally recognized credential (emphasis added). Credentials include, but are not limited to a high school diploma, GED or other recognized equivalents, post-secondary degrees/certificates, recognized skill standards, and licensure or industry-recognized certificates. States should include all State Education Agency recognized credentials. In addition, States should work with local Workforce Investment Boards to encourage certificates to recognize successful completion of the training services listed above that are designed to equip individuals to enter or re-enter employment, retain employment, or advance into better employment.

In addition to the above definition, further clarification is provided in the Data Element definition found in Appendix A of TEGL 7-99, as follows:

Credential must be obtained either during participation or by the end of the third quarter after exit from services (other than follow-up services).

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Mike Huckabee
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During its February 11, 2003 meeting, the Executive Committee of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board approved a clarified definition of “credential” for use in determining performance under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

Specifically, Section (C) of Arkansas’ Definition of Credential provides the procedures for locally defining credentials as:

C. A locally defined and documented credential which meets the following criteria:

A certificate or diploma awarded by a training provider (including an On-the-Job-Training [OJT] employer/provider) that has undertaken the following:

Identified the specific competencies, tasks, or skills attained by the participant. The competencies, tasks, or skills shall be identified by:

Employer input at the national, state, regional, or local level;
Reviewed on an annual basis or periodic basis that is identified;
Developed and implemented curriculum to support instruction of the competencies, tasks, or skills; and
Confirmed attainment or completion of competency, tasks, or skills through valid and reliable testing or demonstration of competence, tasks, or skills.

Obtained endorsement of the Local Board. In endorsing the credential, the Local Board shall confirm:

Initial and periodic employer involvement;
Use of curriculum or instruction consistent with the competency, tasks, or skills for which the credential is issued; and
Use of testing or the demonstration of competence that reasonably confirms that the competencies, tasks, or skills have been obtained.

The approved credential definition required a modification to the Arkansas State Unified Plan. The United States Department of Labor reviewed and approved the requested modification prior to the implementation of this clarified credential definition.

Local Workforce Investment Boards and Program Operators should determine what currently available training and activities could result in locally defined credentials. These determinations must be made in accordance with Section C of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board’s Definition of Credential.

When considering the appropriateness of activities/training that result in credentials, local areas should ensure that the following qualities and attributes are present:

- Allow for upward mobility not previously possible
- Assist in obtaining unsubsidized employment
- Skill/Competency-based
- Recognized by employer community, industry
- Marketable (employers will hire based on credential)
- Has value in the field; Practical and useable
- Sound methodology to validate skills attained
- Transferability across industry sectors/employers

To assist local areas in making these determinations, we have identified the following list of training/activities that have been adopted by local workforce boards around the country that result in locally defined credentials.

General Occupational Skills Training – Classroom instruction that upgrades an individual's occupational skills but does not result in a certificate, can be recognized by a local board through a credential. Credentials can also be awarded for recognized skill standards such as Apprenticeship Programs approved by the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, or by a recognized State Apprenticeship entity. Occupational skills training credentials may also be awarded for vocational specific training, licensure, or industry recognized certificates.

All documentation stating successful program completion should be obtained from the training provider or the participant and copies must be placed in the participant's file.

Partner/Employer/ Occupational Skills Training – In-house training programs offered by partnering agencies and employers could result in an occupational skill credential if the local board approves the training. The training provider must submit documentation that outlines the training activity and type of training that will be provided, the length of the training, and the specific outcomes that are considered to be successful completion. The training provider must administer a pre- and post-test or pre-and post-evaluation and certificate or letter of completion. The certificate or letter must state the type of training received, dates of participation, and the number of training hours completed. A copy of the certificate or letter of completion along with the pre-and post-test evaluations must be placed in the participant's file.

Keyboarding Occupational Skills Training – Participants complete a keyboarding program that enhances their keyboarding skills. Participants begin with a pre-test to determine baseline speed and accuracy. The participant will determine their typing speed and accuracy goals with the assistance from the instructor. Participants must be able to type 40 WPM with 85% accuracy in order to receive a credential. Upon completion of the keyboarding program, participants will complete a post-test and certification of completion will be issued. This certificate must state the name of the training, dates of participation and the number of hours completed. A copy of the certificate is placed in the participant's file.

Basic Computer Occupational Skills - To receive a credential for basic computer skills, the participant must complete one of the following Microsoft Office programs, such as: Word, Excel, Access, or PowerPoint. Each participant takes a pre-test to determine his/her skill level. Participants take a post-test or complete a cumulative end of course project to demonstrate their competency of the particular software program with at least 70% proficiency. Participants demonstrating their proficiency will be issued a certificate of completion stating the name of the training program, dates of participation and number of hours completed. A copy of the certificate is placed in the participant's file.

Work Experience – Paid/Unpaid Work Experiences are designed to eliminate barriers to employment. To earn a credential for Work Experience, a participant must complete a career assessment, demonstrate employability or job readiness skills, identify three areas of career interest, and participate in one job shadow. Once these criteria have been met, a worksite is developed. The worksite will provide one work supervisor who will be responsible for evaluating the participant's job performance. All documentation – time sheets, pre- and post-work experience evaluations, job performance evaluations, and copy of the certificate of completion will be placed in the participant's file.

On-the-Job (OJT) Occupational Training/Customized Training – An OJT contract is specifically written based on the participant's needs. The Program Operator and employer determine the length of the contract. Prior to beginning OJT, participants must complete a career assessment to identify at least three areas of interest. The participants must also demonstrate job readiness skills and complete at least one job shadow. The OJT must be in a career interest area identified by career assessment. Participants who successfully complete an OJT contract will receive a certificate of completion. The certificate must state the name of the training program, dates of participation and number of hours completed. A copy of this certificate and post OJT evaluations will be placed in the participant's file. *(Note: The U.S. Department of Labor encourages the use of OJT contract training that results in certificates that are industry recognized.)*

Job Readiness Employability Skills Training – Participants completing an Employability Skills-Career Strategies Portfolio (CSP) or other Employability Training of at least 15 hours – will earn a job readiness skills credential. Employability Skills Training may be a self-paced workbook curriculum or may be a group activity. There must be a pre- and post-test for the curriculum with quizzes or reviews for each chapter.

Participants must pass the Post Test with a competency of 90% in order to complete the program successfully. Quizzes or reviews are given after every chapter allowing progress to be monitored as the participant completes the activity. Once the program is completed, the participant will receive a certificate of completion stating the name of the training, dates of participation, with the number of hours completed. A copy of this certificate must be placed in the participant's file.

Job Readiness Soft Skills Training – Participants wishing to earn a credential for Soft Skills Training must complete a Career Interest Inventory and identify three areas of interest for employment. He/She must complete work readiness employability skills or demonstrate job readiness skills. Upon completion of this workshop, the participant will receive a certificate that states the name of the training, date of participation, and number of hours completed. A copy of the certificate of completion must be placed in the participant's file.

Job Readiness Training - Job Readiness Trainings are designed to aid participants to obtain employment and meet established goals of their Individual Service Strategy. Adult or Dislocated Worker participants must complete at least two of the following trainings to obtain a Job Readiness Training certificate. Older Youth participants may receive a certificate for completion of each workshop described below. These workshops may be delivered in a group, classroom or individual format including on-line or other media based curriculum.

Participants who complete the training(s) will receive a certificate of completion, which states the name of the training, date of participation, and the number of hours completed. A copy of the certificate of completion will be placed in the participant's file.

Job Readiness Resume Workshop: Participants completing a Resume Workshop will know: the most commonly used resume styles and when to use the different styles, common resume languages, and how to construct a working resume.

Job Readiness Interview Workshops: Participants completing an Interviewing Workshop will be able to demonstrate proficiency in creating positive first impressions, in answering interview questions, in asking appropriate questions, and in post-interview follow-up. Participants will be able to assess their interview skills and note areas for improvement.

Job Readiness Job Shadow or Informational Interview Experience Participants completing a Job Shadow / Informational Interview component must complete a career assessment prior to this experience. Participants must identify at least 3 areas of interest and show work readiness employability or job readiness skills. Once it has been established that these criteria have been met, a Job Shadow/Informational Interview will be developed that corresponds to the participant's career areas of interest. The worksite that is developed will provide an individual to supervise the participant while on the worksite.

The participant will complete a post-job shadowing worksheet when the shadowing is completed. The participant must observe the job duties for a minimum of two hours and may elect to visit more than one time. The participant may also conduct job shadowing using an on-line or other media based component for at least three positions.

Once the participant has completed the Job Shadow and post evaluation form a certificate of completion will be awarded. The post- evaluation and the certificate of completion will be placed in the participant's file. To receive a credential for Informational Interviewing, the above-mentioned prerequisites must be met. A minimum of three Informational Interviews in the areas of interest of the participant must be completed to receive a certificate of completion. Case Managers develop and provide the Informational Interviewing forms to the participant. After they are completed, a certificate of completion is given. The certificate and the Informational Interviewing forms are placed in the participant's file.

Work Keys Work Readiness Training – The American College Testing Program, Inc. (ACT) is a not-for-profit organization that provides assessment, research, information and program management services in the broad areas of educational planning, career planning, and workforce development. Work Keys is a system developed by ACT to help students and workers document their employability skills.

The Workforce Readiness credential may be obtained by any individual, adult or youth, who completes the Work Keys Assessments in Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information, and who scores at a level 5 or higher on all three assessments.

Individuals who score lower than a level 5 will be encouraged to participate in a Workforce Readiness Skills Upgrade class. Upon completion of the upgrade course(s), the individual will take the KeyTrain competency exam. Individuals who score at a level 5 or higher on the KeyTrain exam will be awarded the Workforce Readiness credential.

Local Workforce Investment Boards considering the integration of Work Keys into their systems should contact the nearest Work Keys Service Center for more information. The Centers located in Arkansas are:

Southwest Arkansas Technology Learning Center	Arkadelphia	870/230-5550
Conway Adult Education Center/WAGE	Conway	501/730-9868
University of Arkansas–Fort Smith	Fort Smith	479/788-7799
University of Arkansas at Little Rock	Little Rock	501/569-8483
Workforce, Inc.–West Memphis	West Memphis	870/735-6730

3. **Action Required:** Local areas should follow this guidance to begin determining whether a training certificate can result in a credential for WIA Title I Performance purposes. Notification will be provided upon approval of the State Plan modification.
4. **Inquiries:** Questions or comments regarding this memorandum should be directed to Elroy Willoughby or Stephanie Carlo at (501) 371-1020 or your assigned Regional Advisor.
5. **Expiration Date:** Continuing.