Midwest Credential Transparency Alliance

Kick-off Meeting
May 13, 2021
MHEC Background

• Legislatively created in 1991 through Council of State Governments, Midwest Legislative Conference
• 12 states, Midwest census region
• One of four regional higher education compacts (MHEC, WICHE, SREB, NEBHE)
• Governed by 60 commissioners and alternates
What value do we provide to our states? What is the ROI?

• **Cost Savings Programs** - Technology hardware, software and services, property insurance, student health insurance, cyber insurance

• **Policy Related Programs** - OER, Credential Transparency, NC-SARA, MCMC, MSEP

• **Research** - Dashboard, regular reports on data trends informed by you as well as specific requests

• **Convening Opportunities** - bring together legislative, executive branch as well as higher education leaders to problem solve and share ideas
MHEC’s Credential-related Work

- eTranscripting contract with Parchment
- Comprehensive Learner Records Advisory Group
- Concurrent Enrollment Teacher Credentialing
- Multistate Collaborative on Military Credit

- And now...
- The Midwest Credential Transparency Alliance
Building a linked, open, interoperable data network that everyone can access for timely and trusted information about credentials, competencies, quality, transfer, pathways, outcomes, etc.

That’s the vision behind the support from Lumina, JPMC and Business Roundtable when they founded us, and Gates, Google, ECMC, Walmart, Ascendium, Siegel, NSF, Microsoft and others in sustaining this work.
Why It Matters

- The credential ecosystem is large, complex, and confusing
  - 967,734+ Unique Credentials in the U.S. alone;
  - Thousands of competency frameworks and models;
  - Close to $2t spend on education and training in the U.S. annually;
  - Well over 50,000 providers of credentials;
  - Various and unclear quality assurance entities, standards and public awareness

- Before Credential Engine, no common language to describe or compare credentials and competencies. Now the Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL) is recognized as the standard language to make credentials understandable, comparable, and discoverable.

- Without widespread adoption of this standard common language, people will continue to get lost and lose out on opportunities
State Breakdowns of credentials
Issued by state-based entities for
Diplomas, certificates, apprenticeships, Licenses and degrees.

About Credential Engine

● **Who We Are**
  ◦ Non-profit
  ◦ Community built
  ◦ Vendor agnostic
  ◦ Data driven
  ◦ Mission oriented around credential, competency, and pathways transparency

● **What We Do**
  ◦ Advocate for credential transparency
  ◦ Develop and support linked open data schemas
  ◦ Provide open, interoperable infrastructure
  ◦ Build and mobilize partnerships
  ◦ Provide expertise and services for organizations implementing credential transparency

● **What We Do NOT Do**
  ◦ Collect or verify personally identifiable information
  ◦ Issue credentials
  ◦ Verify issued credentials
The work is already underway in **22 states and regions**, with 5-8 additional states in the pipeline.

www.credentialengine.org/state-partnerships
State leaders are in unique positions to prioritize credential transparency and align it with efforts to identify credentials of value.

Create systems where credentials are:

- Accessible
- Understood
- Comparable
- Connected to other critical education and workforce data
- Communicated so that they serve everyone.
Credentials and Credentialing in 2021

National context... Approximately 1M credentials in the US

Regional context... Approximately 100K credentials in the Midwest

Credentials and Credentialing in 2021

Credentials can

- Reduce financial and social inequality
- Increase economic opportunity and social mobility
- Prepare people for informed citizenship and economic success

Credentials and Credentialing in 2021

Value-add of the regional approach ...

- Addresses transfer of credits and inter-state credential pathways
- Acknowledges the mobility of students, workers, and employers
- Acknowledges the increasing number of remote jobs that span state borders
- Builds upon the success of others (especially those with similar economies and demographics)
- Leverages MHEC’s established relationships and professional communities
- Builds upon existing efforts within states
Midwest Credential Transparency Alliance (MCTA)
Linked Open Data
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Time-limited, revocable, renewable credential awarded by an authoritative body for demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform specific tasks or an occupation.
“Santa Rosa Junior College”

accreditedBy

name

“American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Accreditation”

requires

type

name → “Applied Dental Science”

type → LearningOpportunityProfile

requires

type → Certificate

name → “Dental Assisting”

type → Competency

description

“Graduates of the dental assisting program will be able to make ethical decisions, and demonstrate problem-solving abilities through independent and critical thinking.”

Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL)

https://purl.org/ctdl/terms/
Credential Transparency Illuminates Paths to a Better Future

There are 1 million credentials offered in the U.S. With so many to choose from—without widespread adoption of standards for comparing and evaluating them—people get lost and fall out on opportunity. Together, we and our partners are working to build a linked open data network that everyone can access for timely and useful information about credentials.

WHAT: TRANSPARENCY
Credential transparency means essential information about credentials and competencies public, easily accessible, and actionable so that credentials can be better understood and pursued based on what it takes to earn them, what they represent, and the jobs they can lead to.

HOW: TECHNOLOGY
Credential transparency is made possible by technology. The Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL) scheme allows us to catalog, organize, and compare credentials and related information. Credential data from authoritative sources using CTDL is openly available in the Credential Registry for anyone, anytime, anywhere to search and compare credentials.

WHERE: PATHWAYS
The easier it is to access and use comparable information about credentials, the easier it is for people to find the most effective paths to learn the right skills and find the best jobs. Credential transparency ensures equitable information about quality pathways to opportunities, makes those pathways discoverable, and empowers individuals along the way.

Creativity, Technical Skills, and Social Skills

CREDENTIAL PROVIDERS

LEARNERS & WORKERS

EMPLOYERS

POLICYMAKERS & THOUGHT LEADERS

View the infographic online: https://bit.ly/3pDmTsU
MHEC Commissioners interested in Credential Transparency

86%

Recommendation #1
Include all stakeholders

Recommendation #2
Use web meetings & small action teams
Working Draft: Charter

Working Draft: Charter

Please note that this is a working draft of the MCTA Charter. We are seeking your feedback and input as we refine and update the document.

What is it?
The Midwest Credential Transparency Alliance (MCTA) is a regional alliance focused on advancing credential transparency in service of learners, workers, educators, employers, and the public. Credential transparency is an approach to making essential information about credentials and competencies public, easily accessible, and actionable so that credentials can be better understood and pursued based on what is best to earn them, what they represent, and the jobs they can lead to. The aim is to reduce barriers to information, ensuring that all individuals have equitable access to the full range of learning, advancement, and meaningful career opportunities in the region.

The MCTA operates by hosting regular convenings to:
1. Network broadly to identify challenges, project reporting, and membership
2. Create new resources (videos, blogs, webinars, reports)
3. Share best practices, and required educational and professional requirements, policy, and projects
4. Advance data science and data visualization (promote presentations, articles, social media)

The MCTA welcomes a wide range of participants, whether new to this effort or still on the lookout, including individuals representing state agencies, secondary education providers, post-secondary education providers, employers, quality assurance organizations, workforce development agencies, and more.

Why does it matter?
America is searching for ways to help students and workers find the most efficient and cost-effective pathways to secure the right skills and credentials that lead to good jobs, but right now the learning and work ecosystem is fragmented and information about credentials is confusing and inconsistent. In the Midwest, states are working to leverage data silos to empower an estimated 8.4 million workers in the region. This work entails advancing a linked open data strategy to consistently describe the public key attributes of about 35,000 credential offerings, such as their associated competencies, quality indicators, costs, transfer value, occupational codes, pathways, outcomes, and more. This information is critical for answering many basic questions, such as:

- Career pathways: What do I want to do? What are my options? How can I get started? What’s the sequence? What are the benefits? Will this be a good fit for me?
- Investment decisions: What’s the experience like? How much will it cost? How long will it take? How are these programs different? How effective has this path been for people like me?
- Transfer and prior learning assessment: What if I already have some experience or prior credit (what is my standing? What if my existing credits apply to progress requirements?)
- Verifiable achievements: Are my demonstrated skills and competencies valuable to employers? How can I communicate my achievements to others? How can I secure or advance my career?

The work of defining, accessing, combining, describing, sharing, and comparing information about credentials is difficult and too often falls upon isolated individuals with limited context, resources, or support. Credential transparency and transparency makes opportunities more equitably available. For too long, sharing information about credentials has depended on personal social networks, wealth, and access to institutions, compounding structural inequities. Transparent access to information about credentials and their value can be a crucial element of working to dismantle systems that have created the social bias we see today. The MCTA accelerates the midwest region’s ability to ensure the public can access the information about credentials that opens their eyes to the full range of opportunities for learning, advancement, and meaningful careers.

Who does it?
The MCTA is an alliance of people working toward credential transparency – at all stages and places – from across the Midwest region. Given the broad range of work required to advance credential transparency, the community is intentionally eclectic and open so that it can collectively build a fully-informed, end-to-end network of aligned practitioners.

Anyone can be a credential transparency champion.

- State government officials (governors, legislatures, officials)
- Executive and academic leaders
- Department heads and staff
- Corporations and Workforce Development
- Credentialing organizations (educational and professional organizations)
- Individuals and advocates

This information is critical for understanding the value of credentials, and strategic guidance to facilitate
What is it?
Why does it matter?
Who does it?
How does it work?

Working Draft: Charter

There are many ways to connect with the MCA. Simply...