



RFP: Midwest Credential Transparency Alliance Mini-Grants

Funded by Ascendium, the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) and Credential Engine launched the Midwest Credential Transparency Alliance (MCTA) in January 2021 with a strategic focus on the use of a regional community of practice to advance credential transparency to ensure that information about all credentials in the region is transparent, connected, comparable, comprehensive, and usable.

Since the beginning of the grant, all twelve MHEC member states have participated in the MCTA, whose goals are to advance a linked open data strategy to consistently describe for the public the key attributes of about 150,000 credential offerings, such as their associated competencies, quality indicators, costs, transfer value, occupational codes, pathways, outcomes, and more. In combination with other data sources, 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?
- **Enrollment decisions:** How much will it cost? How long will it take? How are these programs different? How effective has this offering been for people like me?
- **Transfer and prior learning assessment:** What are my options for transferring? How can I obtain advanced standing? Will my existing credits apply to program requirements? Will I lose any time or money?
- **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?

MHEC and Credential Engine invite eligible entities of MHEC member states to submit proposals for small grants of up to \$20,000 designed to support progress towards credential transparency goals and serve as examples for other participating states. These grants are intended to fund demonstration projects or advance work that has already begun such as:

- Publishing a substantial number of new credentials and/or richer credential data to the Registry, especially if publishing that data might serve as a proof point to other states.
- Publishing pathways or transfer information.
- Publishing quality indicators and outcome data.
- Developing end user tools or implementing other use cases, especially if that process contributes to the development of procurement contracts or RFPs that can be reused across the region.

These projects are intended to be short-term projects, with the grant period beginning June 1, 2022 and running through December 13, 2022. Grant recipients will be expected to provide a project summary narrative at the end of the performance period with information about outcomes.

Eligible Entities

Eligible entities include state agencies, postsecondary systems, postsecondary institutions, or non-profit organizations within the twelve member states of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI). Prospective grantees should be able to clearly articulate how they will advance the publishing to the Credential Registry and use of Credential Registry data in their proposal, especially for use by end users such as learners for whom this information is most valuable. Because cross-state collaboration is a key component of this work, we encourage using this opportunity to develop or deepen partnerships across state lines.

Submission Materials and Process

In a one- to two-page narrative, please identify:

- Goals and timeline for your project.
- How this work advances credential transparency in your state and across the Midwest.
- How your proposed work will directly support socioeconomic mobility for historically excluded populations.
- Project budget along with a budget narrative.

The proposal deadline is April 27, 2022 at 5 pm CT; please submit materials to mcta@mhec.org.

Awards will be announced at the next MCTA Quarterly Meeting on May 19, 2022.