**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Introduction: Credential Attainment Decision Tree Tool and Credential Attainment Cohort Capstone**

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GRACE MCCALL: And welcome to "Credential Attainment: Introduction To New Tools." So, without further ado, I'd like to turn things over to our moderator today, Shelia Lewis, workforce analyst United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Take it away, Shelia.

SHELIA LEWIS: Thanks, Grace. And welcome, everyone. And thank you for joining us today. While we allow those who are just joining us to complete the poll question in the chat room, let me take a moment to acknowledge the participants of our state cohort on credential attainment.

So if you are a credential attainment cohort participant, please take this time to type your name, your state, and just type the word cohort in the chat room so that others can identify who you are because unfortunately today, we will not have time to introduce all of you. So in addition, I'd also like to thank you for your participation in the cohort. So on behalf of the Department of Labor and the Department of Education, we'd like to thank you for your participation.

So before I introduce today's presenters, Grace, can we go back to the poll question and let's see what our results are?

MS. MCCALL: Sure. One moment for me to bring that up.

MS. LEWIS: OK. Well, it looks like an overwhelming majority of you so far only – just a few of you have responded to the poll question, but it looks like most states have – (inaudible) – attending this event today, they have developed resources and tools to help them in identifying credential attainment – credentials that count toward the credential attainment indicator. So thank you for participating in that poll question today. And thank you, Grace. And we'll move on and continue to introduce our presenters.

So first, you will hear from Christina Eckenroth of the United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Christina is on our performance accountability team. Next, you will hear from Kellen Grode, also of the United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration Office of Workforce Development.

Moving on. I'd also like to introduce Gregory Scheib and Pam Frugoli of the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration Office of Workforce Investment. Both Pam and Gregory were instrumental in drafting the credential attainment training employment notice. And also, they worked on the credential attainment decision tree tool.

Our final presenter today is Nick Moore. Nick was a participant in our state cohort on credential attainment and he is representing Alabama. Nick will tell us more about Alabama's credentials with – work with credentials and the credential attainment indicator. And he's a coordinator with Alabama's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation.

So let's move on and take a look at what we'll be discussing today. So today's event serves a dual purpose. First, we will introduce a new tool developed by our EPA performance accountability team designed to assist you in the identification of credentials that may meet the reporting requirements of the WIOA credential attainment indicator. There will be a demonstration, followed by examples of how grantees might use this tool.

Next, as a practical example, using the tools developed by the state teams who worked on the credential attainment cohort, we will take and look at the work done by the state of Alabama using the credential attainment decision tree tool in combination with the cohort capstone product and their state action plan.

Next, we will summarize the information from today's event and review some key takeaways. And finally, we'll wrap up by answering any questions that you may have.

So moving on, I'll hand off to Christina Eckenroth, who will provide you with some background about the cohort and the development of the credential attainment decision tree tool. Christina?

CHRISTINA ECKENROTH: Thanks, Shelia. So hi, everyone. You may be familiar with past cohort collaborations between the Department of Labor and the Department of Education, but as a reminder, these are teams comprise of partner programs that are to identify solutions for workforce system challenges.

So to date, we had about four of those cohorts related to WIOA performance accountability issues, like effectiveness in serving employers, co enrollment, data maximization, and the latest, credential attainment cohort.

So if you've ever wondered – if you've ever asked yourself, how do I tell if this is a credential for the purposes of reporting the WIOA credential attainment indicator. Or you wondered if there was some sort of checklist to help you make that determination, then you know you're not alone. This cohort brought together teams from nine states to develop solutions for both their state specific challenges and the problems that they learn – or the challenges they were having in collecting and reporting this data and the system in general to help answer those questions.

So the cohort team is made up of Alabama – and we'll hear from their representative later – Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Vermont. So make sure that you identify yourselves there in the chat so folks know who you are. And the teams were comprised of partners from Title I, which is WIOA adult and dislocated worker youth, Title II, which is our adult education friends, and Title IV, vocational rehab.

They worked on an action plan to meet state specific objectives and that are identifying and reporting this indicator as well as working jointly to create tools and materials for the system at large. And we call that the capstone product. So when we refer to the capstone product, that's what we're talking about.

The cohort plays a significant role in the development of the tools we're going to be presenting today. And these tools are going to help grantees in the system in determining the practical parameters for identifying which credentials are likely to meet the reporting criteria for the credential attainment indicator under WIOA.

A few things to keep in mind as we introduce the tool. There is no absolute list. I'll take a moment to repeat that, let you absorb it. There is no absolute list. It's just not practical for the federal government to review each and every possible credential and every state's unique labor market situation. But we developed these tools to support you, grantees, in that process.

So the tools that we're going to show you today were developed in collaboration with the Department of Education partners. But we think they'll have the most application generally for our Title I grantees due to the types of services we deliver.

But however, Title II folks, don't turn off. Don't go away. You may also find it pretty useful for participants with integrated education and training plans. And to be clear, there's not just one tool, but many tools and resources and we encourage you to use them all.

And for our Title IV friends out there in vocational rehab, some of these tools may seem awfully familiar. You're going to note that we leveraged the workforce innovation technical assistance center, also known as the WINTAC. We leveraged their credential attainment guide that they developed specifically for vocational rehab. So many, many thanks to RSA, the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

Now, if you're looking for that guide for vocational rehab, you can visit WINTAC directly, www.wintac.org. And it's also linked from the resource bar in our interactive tool.

So what should you do to get ready to use the tools? Where do you find these suite of resources I'm talking about? So our policies are available on the DOL website. A quite note that we are transitioning our website, but the current link is here, and you should be able to get to all the materials from this link.

Before using the tool, we recommend you read the guidance. Read the credential attainment training employment guidance notice 2519 on postsecondary credentials for more detailed information about credentials under WIOA. The Training Employment Guidance Letter 10-16, Change 1, that's the one that covers the joint WIOA performance indicators. So if you need a quick brush up, that's the place to go.

TEGL 14-18 is DOL-specific. So if you're a DOL grantee, you want to check that out as well. Please visit workforce DPS to access the WIOA credential attainment, decision tree narrative guide, and the interactive tool. You're going to want to start with the narrative guide before you jump into the interactive tool. I know everyone's going to really want to jump into the interactive tool. So I'll just say at least go back and read the narrative when you get your – you just can't stop from jumping into the tool.

Because the narrative guide's going to provide you some helpful information to – in determining if a credential meets the criteria for the WIOA credential attainment indicator and it has some key things that are taken from guidance, but just a difference between credentials and certificate. Some common kinds of certificates that just do not meet the criteria for this purpose, such as sport readiness and general skills certificates.

We also would like you to check out the cohort's capstone product on workforce GPS for advice from other states about how to use the tool. And we – (inaudible) – that you can read all the other cohort state action plans there to find out what's going on in other states. All right.

So now that you are – have read all of the guidance and clicked on all of these resources, you're ready for the interactive tool. Kellen Grode, Pam Frugoli, and Greg Scheib are going to be our guides through the interactive tool. Kellen?

KELLEN GRODE: Thanks, Christina. And I'm going to go ahead share my screen here in a second, but as you can see on the screen here, we have the link to where our tool's currently located. And as Christina mentioned, you'll be able to find it on the workforce GPS page as well. But it is once I'm sharing, which I think you should be able to see my screen here.

This is what the tool looks like. You'll see here up at the very top, we have some of the same sort of caveats and warnings that Christina just mentioned about recommending folks to read the guidance, to review all the different – the resources, look at the credential team and guide, the sort of static one, which was, as Christina mentioned, borrowed from WINTAC. So we have links to all these various resources here along – in the side bar here.

So we have your WINTAC credential guide. We have your link to the joint performance guidance – the DOL performance guidance, our training unemployment notice about the different types of credentials. Here's a link to the capstone page, which will have not only this tool but the product that was produced by the cohort that will be talked about later on as well. And then, some general links to our workforce GPS performance page and the credential attainment resource page.

So when we're looking at this tool, there's some important things that we wanted to note here. I think – in terms of housekeeping at least. So for one, this is essentially an interactive version of the credential attainment decision tree tool guide, the sort of static one. And while we've designed this to be primarily applicable to Title I grantees, I think a lot of other folks will find this valuable.

Our Title II folks will probably find it valuable for your IET participants. Title four folks, this is – probably looks real familiar because we did base it on the WINTAC guide as well. And I think one of the other notes that we want to make is that this is specifically with respect to postsecondary credentials. So if you're looking at secondary credentials, you're not really going to find a whole lot in here on that.

The other – another question that we got during the development of this is that whether or not this relates to the elements that were in the PIRL, the participant individual record layout. And the answer to that is yes. And so that's sort of the basis for some of the options that you'll see in our dropdowns here later on.

The last thing that I wanted to let folks know before we jump into some examples is that we sort of have a color coding system going on in here where you'll see a green box essentially means –is a good sign. Sort of like your typical stoplight scenario. Yellow box is more of a warning that there might be something wrong. And then, a red means that you should stop and check things out before proceeding any further.

So with that, I think we're going to jump into some questions. And I think Pam, you had the first one.

PAM FRUGOLI: So does this tool make a final determination? Should I take the tool's response as the final answer for inclusion in the credential attainment indicator?

MR. GRODE: Thanks, Pam. So yeah. So that's a good question. And that answer to that is no. I think what we want to make sure that folks – we want to remind folks is that this is only a tool. So it's only going to be as good as the information being input by the user. So to the extent that the information is correct, it should be pretty helpful in you figuring out whether or not something would count towards the credential attainment indicator.

But going through this process and having it say yes, this is the credential is not the same as it being an official answer from the Department of Labor.

So I think that what's important to remember here is that users still have to apply their federal, state, and local guidance as well as consulting with their appropriate program and reporting context in order to further understand whether or not it actually counts. All right.

We're going to jump into some more specific questions about examples, I guess. And so Greg, I think you had one that you were going to ask.

GREGORY SCHEIB: Yeah. Thanks, Kellen. And hi, everybody. Yeah. I know we do get a lot of questions about OSHA 10 and other general safety seal certificates, like food handling and work readiness certificates. So my question is, "If I have a general safety course, for example, that's recognized by a local industry like a construction or hospitality employer, I mean, is that a credential? And what happens there?"

MR. GRODE: All right. Thanks, Greg. Yeah. I think that's a good – a really good place to start. So let's just take this example and walk through what it would look like if we were using the tool.

So we see here on the screen – our first question is what type of organization or institute is – institution is offering the program. And so in Greg's question, he mentioned it was recognized by a local industry. So we're going to say – in this case, we'll just guess right now that that's a professional industry employer organization. It could be any number of things, but for the sake of this, let's say that that's what our answer is.

Then the next question comes in of what type of credential is it. Now, if we're talking about a general safety skills or OSHA 10, I think it's a little bit of a gray area in here. So some people might say other. And when you do – if you say other, then you get this red notification saying that it has to be from one on the list. But let's say for the sake of argument that maybe this is an occupational certificate just to continue going through this process.

So then, the next question pops up and it says what type of skills does it attest to? And this is where we have another list of different types of skills. And in this case, based on what we – what Greg's question was, we know that it was a general safety skills type skills. And so then we get another red popup that says it has to be – a recognized postsecondary credential is awarded in recognition of the individual's attainment of measurable, technical, or industry/occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an industry/occupation.

And then, it gives us this second box, which says, based on your inputs, this is not a real postsecondary credential. So that's sort of how the process works for that one.

Now, I think sort of as we're walking through, one of the things you see is that it does sort of try to provide you with reasons why if it's giving you the answer, that no it's not counted as a credential in the credential attainment indicator. So that's sort of how the tool works.

And I think one thing that we – we get this question a lot with the OSHA 10 or with some of these general safety certificates and one thing that we want to note is that while something like this may not count as a outcome for the credential attainment performance indicator does not necessarily mean that thing is not an allowable service.

It's not intended to say that we don't think that that might not be a valuable service for that individual. It's purely about whether or not it would count as a positive outcome in the credential attainment indicator. So that's one thing that I wanted to point out there before we move to another example.

So I think now Pam, you had another question that you wanted to –

MS. FRUGOLI: Yes. We've gotten questions about stackable credentials. "So what if a participant is a training program to earn a total of three certificates in welding, but earns only one before leaving the training. Does that one credential still count?"

MR. GRODE: OK. Thanks, Pam. Yeah. That's a good question. So for this one, I think it's going to – the exact answers that you put in will obviously depend on the specific situation. But for this one, I think what we're – what we can say is, well, let's say for the sake of argument that this is a program being run by a community college. So we can say, OK, the type of organization is an institution of higher education. And then, when we ask, well, what type of credential it is, well, I think this one, welding is probably going to be somewhere in this occupational certificate certification. For this one, I'll just say occupational certification.

And again, with those categories, I'll just note real quick, that that's where the 10, 25 – training employment notice 25-19 is really valuable in determining which categories different credentials go into.

What type of skills does it attest to? Well, we know welding is a very specific skill set technical industry/occupational. So we can give that answer.

And then we have this next question pop up then, which is, is the training related to an in demand industry/occupation in the local area? And we have some explanatory text beneath it. And so for this scenario, I think for a lot – in a lot of cases, the answer's going to be yes. So for the sake of argument right now, we'll say yes.

But again, for those of you, especially those – this is especially important for the Title I folks on the phone. You know, you have your in demand list for your states and local areas. So this answer's going to be based on whether or not this credential fits into those lists that you have.

But let's say for the sake of argument that it's yes. OK. So that's what pops up there.

Now, if you say – for example, you say no, then you are going to get this warning here that says that while this may count as a credential, note that for Title I funds, they can only be used to pay for training that is related to an in demand industry or occupation.

So this is sort of an important note, I think, that we want folks to keep in mind because while it may be something that would count towards the credential attainment indicator, if it's not an in demand industry or occupation, that's not something that you can be using training funds to provide training in order for somebody to get that credential to receive that type of training.

So just an important thing to note here is that something could meet the definition of a credential even if you aren't allowed to actually provide those services in certain circumstances.

So I think that's where I'm going to stop with the examples because I know I'm already pushing it a bit on time. But I know – I think, Greg, you had one more question.

MR. SCHEIB: I did, yeah. Because one of the other questions is, of course, can I save this information somewhere so I can share it with my case managers or my local – (inaudible) – partner or something like that. And maybe you could talk to that a little bit.

MR. GRODE: Yeah. Yeah. And it's a good question. And I think – well, so the short answer is you cannot save it within the tool. There's no – it doesn't track any of that information. But once you have answered all the questions, you do get the option to export both your answers to the questions and then the result from the tool to either a pdf or a csv. So I'm going to show you what that looks like here real quick. Hopefully everything works all right with the screen sharing.

So when you export it as a pdf, essentially what it does – and hopefully everyone can see this – is that it looks like a screen shot of what the questions and your answers to those questions were with the result. Now, if we go back and we look at the csv, maybe you're – this is more for folks who maybe want to track their answers to every single credential that they're going through.

So if you – when you click that button, what it does is it downloads this information in a csv layout. So it gives you the questions as the top row and then the answers and result in the second row. And so if you were trying to make it, say, a chart where you kept track, you could put in welding certificate. And from there, then you can keep track of all of your different credentials that you're doing.

So you could export everyone and then just add a new row for each one. So that's how that works in terms of being able to use this tool to save the information that you get from the results.

And so with that, I think that is about all I wanted to talk about on that. So I will stop sharing my screen, if I can get that to work. And I think next is Christina is back up.

MS. LEWIS: Well, no. Kellen, actually, Shelia's back up.

MR. GRODE: Sorry about that.

MS. LEWIS: So let's take a pause. That's OK. So just want to thank Christina, Greg, Pam, and Kellen. But let's take a pause for a minute and let's answer a couple of questions before we move on. So while the credential attainment decision tree tool was still fresh in everyone's mind, Pam, do you want to take our first question? I believe we had a question –

MS. FRUGOLI: Sure. Yes.

MS. LEWIS: – on how does the – yeah. How does this tool relate to the credential engine?

MS. FRUGOLI: So actually, credential engine is building a database of information about credentials. But it's going to include – they're hoping to include everything. They have identified 700,000 credentials. Many of those will not meet the criteria for reporting under the wheel of credential attainment indicator.

So this tool is designed specifically for our grantees to know what to report for performance reporting. And that – what is in credential – and may help you identify credentials that you do want to offer, but it's not related to the performance indicator.

MS. LEWIS: All right. Great. Thank you, Pam. And we have another question. I'm not sure who's going to take it, but someone will chime in, I'm sure. And the question is, "What's the difference in occupational certificate and occupational certification?"

MS. FRUGOLI: A certification is typically takes a longer time and it also – it has an exam to demonstrate proficiency. Certificates can often be awarded based on participation. You take a class and you were there the whole time and they give you the certificate, but it doesn't always represent a test. And in addition, certificates can be for smaller amounts of things, like a single skill, like safety or ladder certificate.

So certificate – and they're offered also by many different kinds of organizations where certifications are usually from industry or professional association.

And the 10 describes more about those differences. More than I can say right now.

MS. LEWIS: All right. Great. Thank you, Pam. And Kellen, I believe there's a question that you wanted to address.

MR. GRODE: Yes. So there was a question that came in and I'm not 100 percent sure if it came in timing wise while I was sharing my screen, but it says, "What does the csv export? Is it every possible option?" And really, what it exports is just exactly what you put in. So it has a row for each question and then your answer to those questions, as well as a final row that tells you what the result was, whether it was yes or no, essentially, in the result.

MS. LEWIS: OK. Great. Thanks, Kellen. All right. We are over halfway time. So let's move on to the second part of today's event. So thank you, guys, for those – thank you for your questions. Keep them coming. But we really need to move on.

So again, thank you to my colleagues. And let's move on to our guest today from Alabama. And remind everyone – let me just move – advance the slide.

So again, we want to welcome Nick Moore from Alabama governor's Office on Education and Workforce Transformation. As I stated before, Nick was a participant in our state cohort on credential attainment. And he will demonstrate how his state used the credential attainment decision tree tool, the credential attainment cohort capstone product, their state action plans, and other resources to assist his state in the further development of their credential attainment compendium of credentials.

I'd also like to announce that at the last minute Nick is being joined by his colleague, Dr. Robin McGill (ph). She led the state on developing their credential registry system. Dr. McGill is with the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. And she'll be joining us today to answer any follow up questions.

So also as a reminder, Alabama's complete presentation is uploaded in the chat room for downloading. So Nick, I'll hand it over to you. Tell us about your credentials in Alabama.

NICK MOORE: Well, thanks so much. It's an honor to be with you on behalf of Governor Ivey. Thanks to other states that we participated with and the Department of Labor and Education credential attainment cohort. And I will say that it was very timely because our quality assurance and transparency process for credentials generally and non-degree credentials specifically lined up perfectly with this cohort. So thanks to Maher and Maher and the Department of Labor and Education for the opportunity.

We will share a bit about two – well, I'll say three what we would consider indelible components of the governor's plan and what we would offer to you or recommend to you are three key components of having a true ecosystem for talent and development that is predicated on credential quality. And as we know in the COVID-19 environment that we're in now, we're all rapidly developing new modalities of education and training, new ways of delivering those, and we're certainly relying more and more on non-degree and non-traditional pathways.

And we know now more than ever that the quality around those particularly for many governors, like Governor Ivey, who have an equity imperative of increasing our labor force participation rate, credential quality and assurance is key to making those goals a reality. We're coupling talent development with human capital development through the prism, a stackable, non-degree credentials.

And so how – what I want to tell you about how we got to that point is through Governor Ivey's leadership, which I'll say is the first indelible component, if you want to really operationalize this work in your state, is gubernatorial leadership. In the WIOA system, you've got four titles with six different programs and then myriad other partners that can participate in your state plan. And it's key that you have a governor that is not only involved but is leading the integration of this effort.

So our combined wheel of plan is the wellspring for which this work has sprung forth. And so in the legislation two years ago, Governor Ivey shepherded, if anybody wants to look at it, Alabama Act 2019-506, which created the Alabama committee on credentialing and career pathways. And that's where I'm going to spend some time speaking with you – with on now.

And so it's got two missions. In the slide you'll see there is the first mission that was completed this past year, which is using our labor market information to come up with our list of in demand occupations. And so we use a five star rubric process which you see on the next slide. This is about making sure that we are taking into account family sustaining wages and stackability towards a self-sustaining career pathway is non-negotiable when we're reviewing labor market information to figure out what are the jobs that are in demand in each of our regions.

We have seven regions in the state. And as part of our economic planning, as a part of our 2020 combined planning process, we use this rubric through the ACCCP to help us determine what are in demand occupations for each of our 16 industry clusters. And we use the national career cluster model. And you'll see the first criteria is ensuring that you have at least a 70 percent wage premium. And that's important from the regional level because you know you have variety and you have some colloquial occupation in certain areas and wages change.

So we're partnering with the Federal Reserve system and the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta to co brand a benefit clip and self-sufficiency tool. So when we're looking at that first criteria, 70 percent mean regional wage, we're also looking at self-sufficiency standards are for an individual in each of those occupations by region.

The second criteria is more of a leveling factor to make sure that we are looking at occupations that are just – have the greatest aggregate demand by sector. The third is looking at making sure that we've got annual and growth over the next decade.

You'll see that there's some staggered lines for the fourth and fifth criteria because the – we look at this, we could have both or we could actually have some choice. We could choose one or the other. And you'll see in the fourth criteria, there's a choice within the fourth criteria between two options. So either 75th percentile the regional wage or we're looking at the job that's in the top 40 of our – and we created as a state a top 40 jobs list.

Also, we're looking to make sure that an occupation has a degree, certificate, or credential for initial employment. And so taken together, an occupation has to have at least three out of those five stars. And again, there is some variety. If anybody has questions about that, we can send further resources later.

So next step is taking a look at mission two. And so once we've developed our in demand occupations list, the next step is to figure out the occupational DNA for each of those jobs. And that's really a tri-part function of developing competency models. And also looking at those competency models, we are using the US DOL's framework that the DTA is developing partner with the Urban Institute.

But before we get into that, we want to expand the scope of our each of our 16 TACs that I had mentioned to you that within sector strategies are working to really connect the education and the economy. And it's very easy for us to say and we've all been saying to the extent that we've been in this work that we want to help training and education providers really lean in to the competencies and skills that employers are saying that are in demand.

So to make that happen, you really have to build an infrastructure and a credential and competency taxonomy that allows us to translate business and industry demand into training programs to meet that demand in real time. So the governor's survey and employer competencies is our way of expanding the scope of those seven TAC members to ensure that we are reviewing each of those in demand occupations against industry demand to figure out precisely the skills that they are looking to employ people with. So next slide, please.

So you'll see this is just our timeline. And as you're looking at that timeline, what I want to show you is that this is an iterative and linear process that happens annually. But what we are doing is after we've done that survey, we're building out competency models. And we don't have an example of what it looks like here, but we've all seen them and they're trapezoids and they're tiered and each tier has a different level of skill.

And within our skill or credential taxonomy, what we are truly doing – and when I turn it over to my colleague, Dr. McGill, she'll get into the credential side of this. But rather than looking at a credential in isolation to determine quality, we are looking at a credential from how – what are the different levels of proficiency within a competency and a skill to map that competency to a particular credential. And then that skill and credential would map to a job in a particular region in a different way even for the same job in different regions.

So we're creating not just career pathways, but career lattices that is more of a matrix of opportunity. And so with this opportunity matrix of combining the competencies that are aligned with each in demand occupation and then the industry recognized credentials that are validated by industry through sector strategies, we're developing a talent ontology that then connects credentials, competencies, and occupations to develop stackable career pathways that help us get past one of our biggest obstacle to the state, which are benefit cliffs that make it tough for work to pay for someone when they're coming out of intergenerational poverty or even directly in the workforce.

So by giving people a glide path into the workforce by coupling human services and these career pathways, that's really the rub of the governor's talent and development strategic plan.

So you may be asking where does the credential attainment decision tree fall into this and it's very important because it's part of the process of validating credentials. What we are doing is developing APIs and automated processes on the back end so that when a credential provider uses our form that Dr. McGill will get into to register a credential through our credential engine and we happen to be a partner with credential engine, using the (CT DL ?) language. We will then not be asking the provider to be a subject matter expert on WIOA and training programs. We're doing that work on their behalf.

What we're doing is getting the information that validates that skill and then we are using the credential decision tree, which, again, whether it's serendipity or whatever you want to call it, happen to come out and the 1025-19 happen to come out precisely at the same time we are launching our credential engine, we are using the credential decision tree not just as a static form that an individual is looking at as we're doing manual data entry, but we're using that as a tool to validate automated processes that will help us register credentials. And then go through the process I outlined before of mapping those two skills and occupations.

So at this time, I'm going to turn it over to Dr. McGill to give us an outline of our credential engine process.

ROBIN MCGILL: Good afternoon, everyone. So I'll just be a little bit brief on this slide. So you can see – those of you who are familiar with the credential engine – credential finder tool that Alabama doesn't have any credentials in that finder tool yet. So in some ways, this is a blessing because we can – we have a blank slate that we can use to develop Alabama's process in a streamlined, more uniform way. That's what we're doing through this ACCCP committee on credentialing and career pathways in developing this vetting process that goes through those technical advisory committees.

So our agency, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, already reviews the academic programs for all of our two and four year public institutions. And we have an infrastructure set up with information on those programs already. So it made sense for us to extend that reach into the non-degree credential space.

So we have developed a – the spoke tool that takes different fields from the EPPL, from the Rapid system, from our own academic program inventory, as well as categories that we think would be useful for Alabama students to be able to select credentials from and have put them into a credential industry or credential registry web portal. So a provider will go in and get an account.

Then they will enter information about each credential that we'll keep in a standard database. And then we're going to push that information directly from our system to credential finder so that way all of the credentials from Alabama that appear in there will be more standardized. And if often means that we can set up a vetting process with our ACCCPs and TACs.

So as my colleague, Nick, mentioned, those ACCCP and TACs are charged with reviewing various criteria, especially for our list compendium of valuable credentials which are high quality credentials. Those providers are going to have to construct the credential in such a way that it meets the wheel standard that we've discussed as part of that decision tree.

And Alabama will be registering some credentials that fall below that threshold, but they – and they may receive some vetting by our committee on credentialing and career pathways. But those are going to be stacked in two pathways that lead to one of those compendium of valuable credentials.

So aside from this committee, there is going to be a lot of work going on in the back end by staff administrators who are going to be verifying whether their providers are licensed top rate in the state, verifying whether providers are on the ETPL list, their Title IV eligibility, and also their state approving status for military benefits. And so there are a lot of moving parts here.

We're opening up this registry next week. So we will be – we're just in the beta testing phase. And we'll get a lot more information after we give this thing a spin around the block. Then we'll be able to report back how we did. So stay tuned on that.

And certainly, we'll be happy to take any questions you all have.

MS. LEWIS: All right. Thank you, Dr. McGill. And thank you, Nick. I think that we – there may be a couple of questions in the chat room, if you see those. You want to respond to – if not, we can come back and we can move on.

MR. MOORE: Oh. Yeah. We see them.

MS. LEWIS: OK. Great.

MR. MOORE: OK. So it says many states have policies that state registered apprenticeship is not, by definition, considered in demand. You know, apprenticeships go directly on our eligible training provider list under WIOA. We just set up – we're the first state in over 20 years, I'm told, that set up the state apprenticeship agency. And we are also applying.

We passed – part of that same bill that I mentioned to you that created ACCCP put in some requirements that actually preceded the final rule on IRACs (??) going out that requires the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship to recognize standard recognition entities that are operating in the state. So our Office of Apprenticeship is working closely right now with DOL to apply to become a standard recognition entity for IRACs.

And also we are working to make sure that all of the credentials that the wrap completion certificates and journeyman credentials are certainly above and – equal to or beyond the definition of a recognized postsecondary credential. But also recognize that sometimes they – an apprenticeship credential doesn't have to be stackable because it leads directly to a family sustaining wage.

I don't know if I answered your question or not. That was my stream of consciousness.

MR. SCHEIB: This is Greg. We got another question in about what if a participant is in a four year registered apprenticeship and won't receive a credential until the completion after four years? So often that puts them outside of the time of some grants. And this is to ask, the participant has exited from the Title I WIOA after two years. Will this participant count towards outcome negatively?

Well, you may not be able to completed a registered apprenticeship in the lifetime of some of our shorter term discretionary grants, but – and it is described in the 10-29 or 25-19 that we've been talking about. But you can count in term credentials towards the credential attainment rate. So as long as those in term credentials meet all the other criteria to be a recognized postsecondary credential, then they can count towards that. So you can still get a positive outcome, even if someone doesn't complete their whole four year apprenticeship.

MR. MOORE: And this is Nick. And I'd say that part of what – a lot of the states we talk to and whether it's through NGA or National Skills Coalition, that's why we're happy to participate in this cohort because I think a lot of what is rising to the surface is that – and as we approach the reauthorization of HEA and WIOA for us to work out some of these anomalies that arise around the credential attainment indicator, vis a vis four year programs and longer term programs. But also between the confluence of financial aid and short term and non-degree programs.

And I look forward to working with my colleagues on the phone here to come up with a good solution to that in the next reauthorization.

MS. LEWIS: All right. Thank you, Nick. There's one more question. I don't know if you can answer is now or you can answer it in the chat room. But the question is who in Alabama could someone talk to about the apprenticeship registry that you talked about? And they said they're asking for their apprenticeship folks.

MR. MOORE: Josh Laney (ph) is our director of the Office of Apprenticeship. And I will type his – well, let me say this. If you want to send me your email, then I'll – will send that information on to Josh and have him reach out to you. So that would be appropriate.

MS. LEWIS: OK. Great. Thank you, everyone. We are short on time and we do want to try to get to as many questions as we're able to.

So I'm going to do a brief wrap up recap of every – of today's event. Basically, you've learned about credential attainment decision tree tool. It seems like we're getting a lot of questions. We want to be able to get to those.

But basically, I wanted to talk about our credential attainment toolkit. So we have a whole toolkit there on the screen. And there's probably other resources that we haven't talked about today. But I'm not going to take the time to go through all of those, but you can see them. They're there on the screen. We talked about a lot of them today.

And just remember to use those tools in conjunction with each other. And so here's some quick tips that we want you to take away with you.

When you start determining whether or not a credential applies for the credential attainment indicator, begin with the guidance. So we have those listed there. We talked about them and we do have links to the guidance. But basically, it's TEGL 10-16, change one, TEGL 14-18, and TEN 25-19.

And again, another big takeaway is there is no master credential list. It's just not possible. And we've talked about various reasons why. But we do encourage you to use the entire toolkit. Use all those resources in conjunction with each other. And know that there's not – no one tool is the end all to be all.

Also, realize that when you're determining whether or not a credential counts, it's state specific. So what may count in your state may not count in another state. So also we encourage you to take a look at the state action plan developed by our nine cohort states and model your own state action plan.

Also, we encourage you to be consistent within your state. So make sure you're talking to your colleagues and working with your colleagues within your state so that you're all being consistent. And again, work-readiness and work safety certificates do not count, unfortunately.

So I'm going to open it up now. We have about five minutes left for questions. So I'm not sure who's going to take the first question, but I'll hand it over to my colleagues who have already decided which question you're going to be able to tackle.

MS. ECKENROTH: OK. This is Christina. We want to make sure that you get some of the function – questions answered about the functionality of the tool before we get off this webinar.

So some folks have asked, "Would it be possible to add the name of the credential to the form so that it shows up on the pdf or the csv?" So we are working on some revisions. You know, we would love to hear from you about things you would like the tool to do. This is just our first (inaudible). So we'll take that into consideration. We definitely understand that.

We also had a couple of questions about can locals use this? Can anybody use this? And the answer to that is of course. The link is on Workforce GPS. It's public. Please get a free account for Workforce GPS. And it's accessible, not restricted to states only. It's out there as a tool.

Kellen, did you want to address a couple other questions about accessing the tool?

MR. GRODE: Sure. I think we might've hit on at least the ones that I've seen so far about the tool specifically. But I did want to maybe flag a couple quick things that we saw a lot of questions about.

We saw a lot of questions about the connection with the ETP list. And I would just say at a very high level that it – to the extent that you are thinking about those things, that's an important thing. We don't have a ton of time to go into that today, but it is an important thing to think about how this connects with your ETP list with your in-demand list.

And then we got some other questions about sort of how to categorize things like OSHA trainings and stuff like that. And I think our suggestion in the past has been those aren't things that typically fall under the definition of training in the first place, which as folks rightly in the chat pointed out, means that you wouldn't have to be held accountable for them in terms of the credential attainment indicator if that's the only thing being provided.

So I just wanted to flag those two items really quick for folks because we did see a lot of questions about that.

In terms of the use of the tool, I know that there was a lot of questions about specific things, whether it's badges or Lean Six Sigma or whether this counts or what type of organization counts and those sort of things. And I think all those type of things are things that are worth thinking about as you're using the tool, as you're reading the resources that we've provided along to accompany the tool.

But in order for us to answer – as we mentioned before, answering questions on specific credentials is something that is really not possible. So I – that's part of – that's the big reason why we made this tool is to try to help you all to be able to answer those questions for yourself so that we're not trying to create some master list of credentials that count.

I don't know if – we got a couple more minutes. I don't know if there's other questions some of my colleagues wanted to jump in on. I know we had way more questions than we're going to really be able to address today. So I think what we'll try to do is for ones we didn't – weren't able to get to, we'll work on following up with folks on that as well.

MS. LEWIS: That's exactly right, Kellen. And thanks, everyone, for answering the questions for you. We will attempt to get to those in this forum. But if you still have questions, continue to type those in the chat room. We are able to capture those and we'll find a way to get back to you with those answers.

So we're about one minute away from our end time. I wanted to talk to you a little bit about those resources and where you'll find them. Most of the resources that we talked about today are located on our WorkforceGPS site. And we have a credential attainment resource page dedicated to – it's a landing page. It's dedicated to all of our technical assistance resources related to the credential attainment and credentials.

So there's a hyperlink there for you. Also, all of our materials related to the state cohort on credential attainment are also found there as well on a separate page. So just so you'll know, we did put as many files in our file share window today for you to download.

Just as a note, Workforce GPS will be down after 8:00 p.m. midnight – I mean, I'm sorry – after 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time today through 8:00 a.m. Eastern Time Monday morning. So if you try to access the site during that time, the site won't be available. So that's why we put some of the – today's resources in the file share run for you.

And just to give you a preview of some of our new or upcoming attractions related to performance accountability, we have a new e-learning module that's basically about our negotiations process. It's titled WIOA performance accountability cycle. So it will – we encourage you to visit the e-learning module. It's very interactive and it's cute and it's also educational.

Also, we released version 3.0 of our PIRL reporting online resource. That was released on June 12th. So we encourage you to go out and take a look at the new release.

As you know, the TEN 25-19 on credential attainment was published on June 8th. And as Greg stated, there will be an upcoming webinar later this summer. And we also released our TEGL 23-19 on data validation that's been long awaited and we promised to have an event. It's already scheduled on July 29th from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time. So please look for that invitation and register for that event.

That concludes today's presentation. If you have any further questions that you were not able to type into today's chat room, please send us a message at etaperforms@dol.gov. And on behalf of the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor and also on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, I thank all of our participants, all of our cohort participants, all of our – and my colleagues at ETA. And also to our Title II and title three attendees today.

Thank you very much. And I'm going to hand it back to Grace. Thanks.

(END)