How-to-Start Guide:

Industry-Recognized Credentials



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COLORADO

Department of Education

Office of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

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Additional resources are available for you reference.

IRC

INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIAL

COLORADO
Department of Education

Senate Bill 25-315

POSTSECONDARY AND WORKFORCE READINESS FUNDING 22-54-201. THE DEPARTMENT IS COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE POSTSECONDARY AND WORKFORCE READINESS OPTIONS AND OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS ACROSS THE STATE.

From SB25-315, C.R.S. 22-54-202(7):
"Industry-recognized credential" means an industry certification and a nondegree credential, as both are defined in section 23-5-145.8, that satisfy the requirements developed pursuant to section 23-5-145.6 (2) and identified in the most recent annual Colorado Talent Pipeline report prepared pursuant to section 24-46.3-103 (3).



The Office of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness is leading the implementation of SB 25-315, in alignment with the Colorado Department of Education's Strategic Plan and its Wildly Important Goal of Accelerating Student Outcomes.

Beginning with the graduating class of 2029, the goal is for 100% of students to achieve at least one of the following milestones:

- **Earn a quality, in-demand non-degree credential**
- Earn 12 college credits that apply toward a postsecondary credential
- Participate in at least one high-quality work-based learning (WBL) opportunity

www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary

District/School Assessment: Industry-Recognized Credentials

District/School Name:

Instructions:
Rate yourself (1, 3, or 5) for each question in the matrix below.

	1 Not at All	3 Somewhat	5 Fully
Our district/school offers industry-recognized credentials that align with in-demand workforce sectors in Colorado.			
Our district/school has established partnerships with local employers or industry groups to guide credential offerings and ensure relevance.			
Our district/school provides adequate support (test prep, financial assistance, scheduling, etc.) for students pursuing Industry-Recognized Credentials.			
Our district/school offers industry-recognized credentials that are accessible and promoted to all students.			
Our district/school offers CTE pathway programs that lead to the completion of Industry-Recognized Credentials.			

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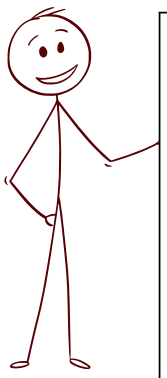
Reflection:

Identify strengths (scores of 5) and gaps (scores of 1 or 3)



Thank you for completing this assessment! **Score:** / 25

Implementation Guidance

Industry-Recognized Credentials (IRCs)	Tools/Resources
Planning & Readiness □ Review the Colorado approved IRC list from CDE. □ Identify which IRCs align with local workforce demand and existing CTE programs. □ Conduct a student interest survey to confirm demand. □ Assess staff certifications, facilities, and equipment needed to support credentials. □ Engage your CTE advisory committee for input.	• List of Qualified Credentials • Interest Inventories and Aptitude Profiles
Partnerships □ Meet with local employers/industry partners to confirm credential value. □ Explore partnerships with community colleges or technical schools for shared instruction or dual enrollment. □ Establish MOUs or agreements with credentialing bodies (where required).	• Labor Market Information • Community College Systems
Curriculum & Instruction □ Map credential competencies to current course standards. □ Embed credential preparation into existing courses or create a new pathway course. □ Ensure instructors have required certifications to deliver credential training. □ Develop exam prep supports (study sessions, tutoring, practice tests).	• Colorado CTE Pathways

Tips: Start a pilot group with one or two IRCs. Provide career counseling so students understand career/college pathways connected to IRC. Offer work-based learning opportunities (See WBL Guide).

Track credential attainment in SIS to submit to CDE for funding and credit. Collect employer feedback and adjust annually based on local labor market needs and IRC list.

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TEAM-BASED IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing the Big 3 works best with shared leadership, where each role brings unique expertise to the table. Collaboration with colleges, workforce partners, and industry is key to providing students with meaningful career readiness opportunities.

What roles and responsibilities would you assign to each of the positions listed below? How might they work together to support students?

ADMINISTRATORS

-
-
-
-
-

SCHOOL COUNSELORS

-
-
-
-
-

COORDINATORS

-
-
-
-
-

TEACHER/ DEPARTMENT LEADS

-
-
-
-
-

COMMUNITY COLLLEGE & WORKFORCE LEADERS

-
-
-
-
-

STUDENTS

-
-
-
-
-

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IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Goal by Year 1 (June 2026)

Guiding Data

Priority Milestones

Top 3 Needs for Start-Up Funding

Month	Task (What)	Responsible Partners (Who)	Due (When)
September			
October			
November			
December			
January			
February			
March			
April			
May			

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Resource Drive

School Counselors

Industry-Recognized Credentials

Contact us: PWR Office

SCAN ME

ICAP Model

Work-Based Learning

College Credit

PWR Monthly Newsletter

I Can Help!

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