

**Effective Date:** February 11, 2014

**Contact Person:** Agency Planner

## **OPERATIONAL DEFINITION:**

### **Credentials and Certificates**

Employers report that individuals applying for available jobs aren't qualified for the job, resulting in the present-day skills gap phenomena. Workforce Solutions (WFS)' MFIP Employment Service (ES) goals include the attainment of credentials and certificates which are recognized as are important milestones on a participant's career pathway. Participants with industry recognized and effective credential and certificates shall achieve greater employment and self-sufficiency outcomes. As of January 1, 2014, WFS Assisted Services and their partner ES agencies will be expected to incorporate credential and certificate plans into participant employment plans and pathway development strategies. The 2014 ES report card will measure success with these goal outcomes.

*The Credentials and Certificates Measures are:*

*Measure 11A- .5% of all participants acquire a minimum of 1 stackable credential completed per quarter.*

*Measure 11B- 10% of participants with job search activities in their employment plan also have acquired a self-marketing credential completed (i.e. MN Ready certificate, Essential Skills certificate, etc.) per quarter.*

While there are numerous training and credentialing options to help participants to achieve necessary qualifications, The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) has defined approved training institutions and qualifying credentials and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) has adopted these WIA definitions. **It is recommended that, to the extent possible, WFS and their affiliated ES Providers, use WIA approved education institutions.** These institutions are valued for their fair market-rate prices, governing bodies and regulatory standards, and employer-endorsed curriculum development work.

**Definition of WIA approved training programs and credentials** (Based on DEED policy #321):

1. Approved training providers must be licensed, registered, and/or accredited by the state in which they operate (e.g. MNSCU) or by state-wide or nationally recognized industry groups (e.g. MN Department of Health CNA Training or National Association of Realtors).

2. WIA and DEED approved training providers are listed on [iSeek](http://www.iseek.org/education/collegeList?area=&major=&instType=&wia=W&tuition=&x=27&y=10) at:  
<http://www.iseek.org/education/collegeList?area=&major=&instType=&wia=W&tuition=&x=27&y=10>
3. A credential is the formal recognition of a participant's attainment of measurable skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an occupation. These skills are generally based on standards developed or endorsed by employers.
4. Credentials may come in the form of:
  - a. Educational diplomas, certificates, and degrees;
  - b. Registered apprenticeship certificates;
  - c. Occupational licenses;
  - d. Personal certifications from industry or professional associations; and
  - e. Other skill certificates for specific skill sets or competencies within one or more industries or occupations (e.g. writing certificate or leadership certificate).
5. Various public and private entities such as educational institutions, industries, or occupational certifying organizations have the authority to issue a credential including:
  - a. A state educational agency or a state agency responsible for administering vocational and technical education;
  - b. An institution of higher education that is eligible to participate in federal financial aid programs;
  - c. A professional, industry, or employer organization, or a product manufacturer or developer (e.g. Microsoft Certified Database Administrator);
  - d. A registered apprenticeship program;
  - e. A public regulatory agency (upon a participant's fulfillment of educational work experience or skills requirements) that are legally necessary for an individual to use an occupational title or to practice the occupation (e.g. State Certified Asbestos Inspector);
  - f. A program that has been approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs;
  - g. Job Corps centers that issue certificates; and
  - h. An institution of higher education which is formally controlled or chartered by the governing body of an Indian tribe.
6. Credentials should be industry-recognized, stackable, portable and accredited.
  - a. "Stackable," are a sequence of credentials that a participant can accumulate over time to help him/her move along the career pathway or up a career- advancement ladder.
  - b. "Portable," are credentials that are recognized in other settings and not just with a particular in-house employee training program.

**Methodology:** Hours toward this activity will be attained at an on or offsite training facility. A minimum of one credential attained (see #4 above) will count positively toward this measure.

**WF1 Measure:** The Credentials and Certificates Measure 11A will be opened up in WF1 as part of the appropriate activity (i.e. Vocational Training/ Education- 12 months

or less, Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED) Training, etc.) and designated by subtype “11ACR”. Once the credential, license, or certificate is earned, the completion date is entered in the “End Date” box under the heading “Close Activity Status”, the completion results are “Satisfactorily Completed”, and the activity is closed, then the measure will be counted in the quarter in which the activity end date occurs. If the participant continues with the same education activity, a new activity will be opened.

**Definition of self-marketing credential:** Self marketing credentials can be certificate of program completion and/or evidence of a specific knowledge gained (i.e. expertise with online job search or completion of Networking 101). These self marketing credentials can be designed by the ES agency or other community partners. Examples of self marketing credentials include WFS’ MN Ready or Essential Skills certificate. Another example is the National Career Readiness Certificate.

**Methodology:** Hours toward this activity will be attained at an on or offsite training facility. A minimum of one credential per quarter is required.

**WF1 Measure:** To achieve the Credentials and Certificates Measure 11B, the participant will be enrolled in the “Job Search” activity designated by a subtype labeled “11BSM”. Once the self-marketing credential is earned, the “Other Recognized Credential” box is checked, the date it was earned is entered in the “End Date” box under the heading “Close Activity Status”, the completion results are “Satisfactorily Completed”, and the Job Search activity is closed. After all those actions are completed, then the measure will be counted in the quarter in which the end date occurs. If the participant continues with job search activities, a new activity will be opened.

### **Steps to take with participants:**

1. Coach participants to receive education from WIA approved or occupational certified providers.
2. Direct participants to find the most affordable WIA approved or occupational certified provider.
3. Unless the participant previously took grants/loans from a non WIA approved educational provider, or a unique training program is only offered by non WIA approved educational provider, only approve WIA approved or occupational certified educational providers.
4. Ensure that [Occupational Preparation Packet](#) is complete; refer to the DWP/MFIP Education and Training Activity Policy Memo (WS2011-03) for details.