

# Credentialing in Virginia

An overview of credentialing as a means for strengthening Virginia's workforce

# Team

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# Today's Presentation

1. What are the pluses and minuses of credentialing?
2. In what ways is Virginia doing well in this area and where are the opportunities for growth? (Virginia's Credentialing Initiatives)
3. Credentialing Innovations Outside of Virginia
4. How should Virginia expand upon credentialing in a way that provides proper training and leads to the economic advantage of the citizens?

# Pluses of Credentialing

## Job-seeker

- ▶ Demonstrates mastery of a standard set of skills, abilities, and facts
- ▶ Can provide relatively rapid re-training in areas unfamiliar to individual
- ▶ Shows willingness / determination to increase knowledge in career area
- ▶ If done right, provides marketable skills job-seekers
- ▶ Generally lower cost than traditional education

## Prospective Employers

- ▶ Can be used to pre-screen candidates
- ▶ Provides a level of confidence in applicants' capabilities
- ▶ More adjustable to business needs than traditional education
- ▶ Lower training cost for employers

# Minuses of Credentialing

## Job-seeker

- ▶ Proliferation of credentials/certs have undermined the value
- ▶ Provides book knowledge/Cannot replace actual experience
- ▶ Focus is not on preparation for long-term advancement

## Potential employer

- ▶ Significant variance in quality of credentialing organizations
- ▶ Credentials must evolve in concert with business needs
- ▶ Fewer soft skills taught in credentialing arenas
- ▶ Detailed interviews may *seem* unnecessary
- ▶ Not a guarantee of person's potential to progress within profession

# Policy Initiatives

- ▶ **New Virginia Economy Strategic Plan**
  - “Credentials to Compete”
    - Reform Virginia’s Public Workforce System
    - Build Robust Public–Private Partnerships to Drive Skills
    - Create strong pipeline that helps strengthen target sectors, especially STEM–H
- ▶ **New Virginia Economy Workforce Initiative (EO23)**
- ▶ **New Virginia Economy Strategic Plan And Steering Committee (EO26) – "Skills to Jobs" Workforce**
- ▶ **Expanding Registered Apprenticeships In Virginia (EO49)**

# Virginia's "Credentialing" Initiatives

## Improving the Credentialing Foundation – Core Skills

- ▶ **Virginia's Career Readiness Certificate (CRC)** program provides a simple, low cost tool for individuals to document their workplace skills and for employers to match those skills to fill their open positions.
  - Based on **Work-Keys** assessment scores of skills needed at some level in almost every job, occupation or career in today's economy

# Virginia's "Credentialing" Initiatives

- ▶ **Lord Fairfax Community College** received \$3 million grant from U.S. Department of Labor for competency planning, which would allow someone's experience to be packaged as part of a credentialing process, rather than college credit-based.
- ▶ Federal Workforce Investment Act funding, in 7 participating community colleges for student completion of credentials identified regionally as high-demand by business and industry:
  - Project Management Professional (PMP), American Welding Society (AWS), Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Certification



# Virginia's "Credentialing" Initiatives

- ▶ **"Higher Education Conference"** (Dec. 2014) Virginia Community College Systems annual conference, attended by officials from Virginia's 23 community colleges, workforce investment programs, private agencies, legislators and business leaders had substantial focus on:
  - Credentials
  - credential attainment
  - how to track credentials
  - how to get industry on-board to validate credentials.
  
- ▶ **Commonwealth Scorecard of Economic Opportunity**
  - Online report hosted by Council for Higher Education; Includes plan for implementing new statewide common metrics and methods of measuring:
    - Postsecondary education credential attainment
    - Employment
    - Wages
    - professional mobility
    - return on investment

# Innovations in other states

- ▶ North Carolina
  - NCWorks Career Pathways – Career Technical Education (CTE) Work–Based Learning Toolbox – Apprenticeships
- ▶ Georgia
  - Work Based Learning Act – Dual Enrollment opportunities in the Technical College System
- ▶ Iowa
  - Iowa Apprenticeship and Job Training Act – Triples funding for apprenticeship programs
- ▶ Louisiana
  - Workforce and Innovation for a Stronger Economy (WISE)– funds postsecondary programs in high–demand fields through matching contributions from Industry

# Credentialing Innovations Outside of Virginia

- ▶ **Digital Badges – The MacArthur Foundation** – Digital badges are an assessment and credentialing mechanism that is housed and managed online. Badges are designed to make visible and validate learning in both formal and informal settings, and hold the potential to help transform where and how learning is valued.
- ▶ **MITx** – Free online courses from Massachusetts Institute of Technology
  - Courses embody the inventiveness, openness, rigor and quality that are hallmarks of MIT, and many use materials developed for MIT residential courses in the Institute's five schools and 33 academic disciplines. Certificates of completion to anyone who successfully finishes courses the university makes available for free online, with a small fee for the certificate itself.

# How Should Virginia Expand Credentialing?

How should Virginia expand upon credentialing in a way that provides proper training and leads to economic advancement of the citizen?

## Central Caveat:

**Listen to Business First! Credentials are only significant to the extent that employers value them. Must strive to integrate business into planning of credentialing initiatives.**

Successful outcome also requires a:

- Change in Public Perception
- Promotion – Champions
- Investment to create opportunity

# How Should Virginia Expand Credentialing?

Awareness of the Value of Alternatives to college is key to adoption of Credentialing as a main stream way to personal fulfilment and economic stability

## Perception Change for K–12 Counseling

- ▶ Theme for past 40(+) years is “College is the Ticket”
- ▶ Start promoting options to college earlier
- ▶ Remove the stigma of Credentialing options
- ▶ Educate parents on options, not just kids

# How Should Virginia Expand Credentialing?

## Promote

- ▶ Credentialing Fairs just like College Fairs; Share success stories
- ▶ Partnerships with Industry to support K–12 on local level (Education and Internships)
- ▶ Partnerships with for–profit Technical Schools on local level
- ▶ Credit for High School training and job experience (DECA model)

# How Should Virginia Expand Credentialing?

## Invest

- ▶ Guidance Counselors in Schools or Districts to lead efforts
- ▶ Increase Financial backing with Cost Sharing programs
- ▶ Economic research to support changing Perceptions and demonstrate economic advantages

# Credentialing in Virginia

That is the end of the formal presentation on Credentialing.

Are there any questions for the team?



# What is a Credential?

- ▶ Credentials take multiple forms
  - Educational certificates/degrees; certifications; and gov't issued licenses
- ▶ For purposes of this presentation a credential is defined as a certification that:
  1. Indicates competency or mastery of specific knowledge, process or skill set that can be measured against accepted standards.
  2. Not tied to a specific educational program
  3. Standards usually determined by business or industry group
  4. Often ongoing requirements for remaining certified