

# I.C.E. Press Release – Grant Announcement

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## Institute for Credentialing Excellence Selected for National Initiative to Advance Workforce Mobility

*The initiative funds solutions that make skills and credentials more visible, trusted, and portable, so working adults can access better career opportunities.*

**Washington, D.C.** — The Institute for Credentialing Excellence (I.C.E.) has been selected as one of 10 grantees, chosen from more than 400 applicants, for the *Advancing Workforce Mobility* initiative, a \$3.5 million national effort led by Education Design Lab in collaboration with Credential Engine and supported by Walmart.

This initiative brings together leading nonprofit and public sector organizations to make workers' skills and credentials more visible, trusted, and transferable, helping more people access quality jobs and advance their careers.

As part of the initiative, I.C.E. will receive nearly \$250,000 to develop a scalable model in which paid, skills-based micro-internships, designed by credentialing organizations, are validated by employers and converted into portable digital credentials.

“This recognition marks an important milestone for I.C.E. and for the credentialing community as a whole,” said I.C.E.’s Executive Director Denise Roosendaal, FASAE, CAE. “We are excited to explore innovative approaches that better connect learning, skills development, and employment outcomes. By aligning credentialing organizations with employers and real-world work experiences, this initiative has the potential to create more transparent and trusted pathways for individuals to demonstrate their skills. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that credentials more accurately reflect what people can do, and that those credentials are recognized and valued in the labor market.”

### Why This Matters

Across the country, millions of workers gain valuable skills through work experience, community college, military service, and other non-degree pathways. Yet these skills are often difficult for employers to identify, understand, or verify.

Through this initiative, I.C.E. and its partners—CredUp Hub, Parker Dewey, Lightcast, and Credly—will connect individuals from nontraditional career pathways to paid, short-term micro-internship projects that produce real work outputs while validating demonstrated competencies. Upon completion, participants will earn portable digital credentials that verify their skills and help them compete for quality jobs in high-demand sectors.

The project is designed to be replicable across industries and credential types, creating a scalable model that other organizations can adopt. I.C.E. will also convene an advisory group of partners and key

stakeholders, including credentialing organizations, employers, and Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs), to guide and inform the work.

### **About Advancing Workforce Mobility**

More than 70 million U.S. workers are Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs), yet many face barriers because their skills are not easily recognized or translated across education and workforce systems.

The Advancing Workforce Mobility initiative supports solutions that:

- Make skills more visible and easier to understand
- Build employer trust in non-degree credentials
- Connect credential data across education and workforce systems
- Expand access to economic opportunity

Over the next 18 months, grantees will participate in a national learning cohort to test, refine, and scale solutions that improve how skills and credentials are recognized and used.

“Too many workers have the skills employers need but lack clear, trusted ways to demonstrate them,” said Tara Laughlin, Senior Director of Skills Visibility at Education Design Lab. “These grantees are building solutions that move us closer to a more transparent, skills-based economy.”

### **About the Institute for Credentialing Excellence**

The Institute for Credentialing Excellence (I.C.E.) is a professional membership association and nonprofit dedicated to advancing credentialing through education, standards, research, and advocacy. I.C.E. serves organizations and individuals across the credentialing industry through its accreditation programs for certification and assessment-based certificate programs. Its work ensures that credentials are rigorous, trusted, and meaningful across professions and occupations. Learn more at [www.credentialingexcellence.org](http://www.credentialingexcellence.org).

### **About CredUp Hub**

CredUp Hub (an affiliate of Mickie Rops Consulting) is a credentialing consultancy and resource platform that has designed and improved hundreds of credentialing programs globally. They help credentialing agencies strengthen through comprehensive audits, build trust through accreditation attainment, and ensure workforce relevance through the use of labor market data. CredUp Hub serves as the principal investigator and project lead for the initiative. Learn more at [www.creduphub.com](http://www.creduphub.com).

### **About Parker Dewey**

Parker Dewey is a recruiting and hiring platform that helps employers engage, assess, and hire early-career talent through Micro-Internships, short-term, paid, professional projects that typically range from 10 to 40 hours. These flexible opportunities help students and recent graduates demonstrate their skills through real work, while giving employers a low-risk way to get work done, evaluate candidates, and build stronger talent pipelines. Learn more at [parkerdewey.com](http://parkerdewey.com)

### **About Lightcast**

Lightcast is a global leader in labor market intelligence, empowering smarter workforce decisions for businesses, education institutions, industry leaders, and governments worldwide. With comprehensive labor market data spanning billions of job postings, hundreds of millions of career profiles, and data from more than 100 government sources, Lightcast delivers deep labor market insight into the dynamic and constantly changing landscape of skills, occupations, workforce trends, talent pipelines, and employer

demand. Lightcast's leading taxonomies, dynamic datasets, and insightful approach to "credentials of value" analytics helps organizations across the "learn to work" ecosystem align credentials and training with real-world labor market needs. Learn more at [www.lightcast.io](http://www.lightcast.io).

### **About Credly**

Credly, a Pearson offering is the world's leading digital credentialing platform, helping thousands of organizations globally issue, manage, and verify skills and issue verified credentials. Credly's open-badge platform closes the gap between skills and opportunity by translating learning outcomes and demonstrated competencies into portable, verifiable digital credentials that earners can share across LinkedIn, resumes, and other platforms. Learn more at [www.credly.com](http://www.credly.com).

### **About Education Design Lab**

Education Design Lab is a national nonprofit that co-designs inclusive, skills-based education-to-work pathways that improve economic mobility for the New Majority Learner-Earner. Learn more at [www.eddesignlab.org](http://www.eddesignlab.org). To learn more about the ten organizations selected for this grant program, click here: [Education Design Lab announces grantees for \\$3.5 million initiative to advance workforce mobility through credential transparency and skills validation - Education Design Lab](#)

### **About Credential Engine**

Credential Engine is a nonprofit dedicated to creating transparency in the credential and skills marketplace to help people find pathways to opportunity. Learn more at [www.credentialengine.org](http://www.credentialengine.org).

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