

Invitation to States – Round 2

Pilot Project on Improving Data Exchange Between Industry Certification Organizations and State Education and Workforce Longitudinal Data Systems

Background

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), in cooperation with a number of national and state partners, is sponsoring a project to expand and improve data exchange between industry certification organizations and state longitudinal data systems. In this project, industry certifications refer to the full spectrum of certifications addressing industries, occupations and professions, and technical skill domains.

The project is based on a [multi-year roadmap](#) for the development of a national data exchange clearinghouse. Current industry partners include CompTIA and the Manufacturing Institute (an affiliate of the National Association of Manufacturers, or NAM).

The Department of Education is also interested in the development and outcome of this project. Industry certifications and licensure are a growing part of the expected outcomes of career and technical education (CTE) programs, and the Department is interested in the identification of solutions to the issues surrounding state collection of valid and reliable data. The Department is also interested in interacting with other federal agencies with similar interests, a goal this project will help meet.

Over the next year, ACTE will focus on raising awareness of the need for improving data exchange (Step 1 in the Roadmap), and a pilot project will be conducted between states and industry partners (Step 2 on the Roadmap) on how data can be effectively and securely exchanged and used for the benefit of all parties. This pilot project is based on a recent Illinois and CompTIA project that demonstrated the feasibility of linking state and certification data.

Pilot Project

The pilot project will involve several states working with CompTIA and/or NAM to replicate and expand the Illinois project over a one-year time period starting in December 2012.

- [CompTIA](#) is the largest vendor-neutral information technology certification organization in the country, offering a variety of certifications such as A+, Network+, and Security+. See the following link: <http://certification.comptia.org/getCertified/individuals.aspx>
- [The Manufacturing Institute](#) and the NAM-Endorsed Skills Certification System include 14 manufacturing certification organizations. See the following link: <http://www.themanufacturinginstitute.org/Education-Workforce/Skills-Certification-System/Certifications/Certifications.aspx>

The pilot project will involve states partnering with one or both certification organizations to establish procedures for merging certification information into state education and workforce longitudinal data systems. States and industry partners will conduct this work voluntarily with their own resources and will not be provided with funding assistance. ACTE and other partners will provide technical assistance and staff support in coordinating the project and developing a final report based on the results from the state pilots.

Project Objectives. The pilot project has four major objectives:

- Confirm that multiple states can execute data sharing agreements with certification organizations for the purposes of performance reporting, continuous improvement, and sharing of consumer information (see [roadmap](#)).
- Explore data matching protocols using personal identifiers (e.g., first name, last name, geocode) from both certification organizations and states and develop recommendations for improving data matching.
- Explore and promote the mutual benefits of data sharing partnerships between state and certification organizations.
- Develop recommendations for conducting further projects and next steps in the roadmap.

State Requirements for Participation. The pilot project requires that state partners minimally match UI wage record data to data records on postsecondary education students, including community college students that are enrolled in credit courses and programs. States will be encouraged to include students enrolled in non-credit courses and programs if data are available.

Work Tasks and Deliverables. States will be asked to do the following:

- Establish a state project team, with a designated team leader, consisting of representatives from state education and workforce agencies including a CTE representative.
- Execute data sharing agreements with at least one of the participating certification organizations. States can choose one or both organizations to work with on the project.
- Develop a data matching protocol and conduct matching in cooperation with industry certification partners in conformance with applicable privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations.
- Develop data tables on number of test takers and passage rates by student demographics including age, gender, and race/ethnicity and 2-digit, 4-digit, and 6-digit CIP. Develop additional tables by special populations, if available.
- Develop data tables on employment and earnings of targeted students comparing students with and without certifications.
- Develop a final presentation and written report of pilot test results including: (1) data sharing agreement issues, (2) matching protocol and results, (3) data tables on test takers and passage rates and employment and earnings outcomes, (4) achieved benefits and lessons learned, (5) recommendations for improving matching protocols and results, and (6) recommendation for additional pilot projects and moving to next steps in Roadmap.
- Make a presentation on the pilot project to the project's national advisory group in a webinar.
- Submit final written report based on feedback from the project's national advisory group.

Project Timelines. First-round states working with CompTIA and the Manufacturing Institute will follow the following timelines based on the different timeframes preferred by industry partners:

- CompTIA--January 15 to October 15, 2013
- The Manufacturing Institute—May 1 to December 15, 2013

Round 2 timeframes will be worked out individually between the states and CompTIA and the Manufacturing Institute.

State Eligibility and Application Process and Deadline

From the states that volunteer to participate in this pilot project, ACTE will select those that can meet the following project requirements:

- State education and workforce agencies agree to sign and execute a data sharing agreement with industry certification organizations based on the CompTIA data sharing agreement with Illinois.
- State data systems currently link postsecondary education and UI wage record data for performance reporting and improvement.
- State data systems can be used to match industry certification data with at least 2 years of individual student records for postsecondary students participating in credit courses and programs and at least one year of quarterly UI wage record data. ACTE will give priority to states that can also match industry certification data with individual student records for postsecondary students participating in non-credit courses and programs.

States wishing to apply for participation in the second round must submit a letter to ACTE by **May 8, 2013**, stating their interest in participating in the pilot project and that they meet the project requirements and can devote the staff time necessary to complete all work tasks and deliverables according to the project timelines. States applying for participation will be notified of their selection by **May 22, 2013**.

States can submit an application letter by e-mail to:

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For Further Information. If you have any questions about this project, please contact Catherine Imperatore using the contact information above or check out the [Certification Data Exchange Project](#) page on the ACTE website.