

# Assessing the Role of Private Short-term Credential Providers in State Policy

## Request for Proposals

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

Short-term credentials are taking on an important role in the postsecondary sector, with growing student demand, new state and federal investments, and a groundswell of offerings from non-institutional providers entering the marketplace. Yet these credentials, especially when offered by private providers, often fall outside the scope of traditional regulatory structures for postsecondary education, and data on their nature and outcomes is extremely limited.

To support states/Pacific jurisdictions in developing a more comprehensive overview of the short-term credential activity in their states and its impact on their students and economies, WICHE — in partnership with The Pew Charitable Trusts' Quality Skills and Education Pathways project and the Education and Employment Research Center — is convening a small group (three to five) of interested states/Pacific jurisdictions to collaborate on reviewing, assessing, and enhancing their current regulatory approaches to, and data related to, short-term credentials offered by private providers. The project will run for 24 months and includes a \$15,000 subaward to support participation in addition to technical assistance and funded travel. Though not specific to Workforce Pell, this work could be used to support the refinement of state Workforce Pell approval processes.

### GOALS

The overarching goal of the project is to support thoughtful policy choices around state/Pacific jurisdiction oversight of short-term credentials. Participating states/Pacific jurisdictions will take part in a community of practice designed to support inter-agency collaboration, foster cross-state learning, and enhance data-informed decision making, ultimately resulting in sustainable improvements to oversight practices.

### SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPANTS

The project will run on a two-year timeline; selected states/Pacific jurisdictions will receive a \$15,000 subaward to support their participation; and all travel costs associated with attending

the two annual, in-person meetings will be covered. The project will include the following activities:

- **Community of Practice**  
Teams will join quarterly community of practice calls and participate in two annual meetings over the course of the project. The community of practice will include opportunities for peer learning and shared problem-solving, as well as input from national experts on topics including risk-based accountability models and data governance frameworks.
- **Team Meetings**  
WICHE will support states/Pacific jurisdictions in convening team meetings throughout the course of the project, including agenda development and facilitation support as needed.
- **Technical Assistance**  
Teams will receive technical assistance support tailored to their specific needs and areas of interest. Examples of technical assistance could include support in identifying possible data sources, creating operational definitions of data elements, developing strategies for measuring longer-term outcomes, and identifying and convening relevant partners to explore opportunities for sustainable, ongoing collaboration.
- **Data Mapping**  
Teams will review currently collected data elements, the extent to which they are or could be integrated into state/Pacific jurisdiction data systems and assess whether these provide states/Pacific jurisdictions with the information they need to make informed policy decisions (this could include programs' eligibility for Workforce Pell funding).
- **Research Contribution**  
Teams will contribute to national research on the landscape of private provider data through their participation in the community of practice, including an opportunity for one to two interested states to collaborate with the [Education and Employment Research Center](#) at Rutgers University on an in-depth brief exploring their private provider data ecosystem.

## HOW TO APPLY

Interested states/Pacific jurisdictions should submit a three to five page letter detailing:

- How the project aligns with the state/Pacific jurisdiction's current priorities for higher education.
- A brief summary of the state/Pacific jurisdiction's approach to oversight of private, short-term credential providers.

- A high-level overview of the data elements currently collected related to private providers of short-term credentials and a brief description of lead applicant's access to these data. Please include a proposed strategy for accessing data elements, if needed.
- Desired outcomes for participating in the project and how the project activities would support the state/Pacific jurisdiction in achieving those outcomes. Please include an outcome related to the state/Pacific jurisdiction's goal for data improvements.
- Describe state team composition (list possible participants)
- Describe state team composition, including lead applicant and if applicable other partners (for example, state longitudinal data system or related office). Partners are encouraged but not required.

Proposals should be submitted via email to Christina Sedney at [csedney@wiche.edu](mailto:csedney@wiche.edu) by 11:59 p.m. (MT) on October 22, 2026.

### Eligibility

The RFP is open to all WICHE states and Pacific jurisdictions: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, the U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, and American Samoa), Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

WICHE encourages cross-agency collaboration in these proposals. Proposals should be submitted by a state, territory, or system-level agency with a role in the oversight of private credential providers and access to associated data. While WICHE encourages cross-agency collaboration in submission, it is not required.

### Selection

Participants will be selected by committee of higher education policy experts, based on their response to the RFP.

Successful applicants will demonstrate: a cross-sector commitment from state leadership to understanding their private provider landscape; willingness and ability to examine relevant data; and political and bureaucratic will to adapt policy and practice approaches based on findings.