

Credentials of Value

A working definition for West Virginia postsecondary education

Short:

Credentials of Value are education awards—such as degrees and short-term certificates—that advance a person’s economic and social mobility, opening doors to better jobs, higher salaries, and opportunities for professional advancement. Credentials of value provide a strong return on investment of time and money, either by themselves or combined with other credentials and work experience.

Long:

A Credential of Value in West Virginia is an education award such as a degree, certificate, or micro-credential—earned either after high school or in addition to a high school diploma—that qualifies an individual to get a better job at a higher wage with improved opportunities for professional advancement.

Credentials of value meet established standards for quality, workforce relevance, and learner impact. Their value is enhanced when they are accessible, affordable, and can be combined with other awards and work-based learning to earn higher credentials including degrees. Credentials of value deliver a positive return on the investment of a learner’s time and money within a reasonable timeframe and provide economic benefit to local and regional communities by helping to meet current and future workforce needs.

Credentials are most valuable when their content and workforce connections are transparent, and the knowledge and skills gained are validated by employers or through reliable assessments. Credentials of value are transferable across institutions and employers, delivering clear outcomes that prepare individuals for meaningful employment, enhanced pay, and continued learning opportunities.

Soundbite:

A Credential of Value should improve your life by helping you get a better job and a higher wage. It should be worth what you pay for it, and you should see real benefits within a reasonable time after completing it.