PROGRAM MEMORANDUM 26-6

DATE: October 14, 2026
TO: Adult Education Local Program Directors and Adult Education Division State Staff
FROM: Nick Moore, Chief Adult Education and Learning Officer
SUBJECT: Non-Degree Credentials of Value Policy for Alabama Adult Education Programs

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Program Memorandum is to establish a statewide policy governing the identification, approval, use, funding, reporting, and evaluation of Non-Degree Credentials of Value (NDCVs) within programs supported or administered by the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) Adult Education Division.

This policy is intended to ensure that public resources used to support credential attainment lead adult learners toward credentials that have demonstrable value in the Alabama labor market and provide meaningful opportunities for employment, wage progression, career advancement, continued education, or Registered Apprenticeship.

This policy also establishes a common framework for aligning Adult Education credential activity with:

1. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA);
2. WIOA implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 463;
3. Federal WIOA performance accountability requirements;
4. The Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP);
5. The Alabama Committee on Credential Quality and Transparency (ACCQT);
6. The Alabama Credential Registry;
7. Statewide and regional in-demand occupation and career pathway determinations;
8. Alabama's implementation of Workforce Pell Grants; and
9. ACCS career technical education, non-credit workforce training, Skills for Success, Registered Apprenticeship, and other workforce programs.

The policy establishes a presumption that Adult Education resources should support credentials because of the economic and career value they provide to learners, rather than credential attainment for its own sake.

II. Background

A. Federal Policy

WIOA defines a recognized postsecondary credential as an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by a state or the federal government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

Credential attainment is also one of WIOA's primary indicators of performance. For Title II participants, recognized postsecondary credential attainment is measured for participants who were enrolled in a

postsecondary education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential and who exit both the postsecondary training program and the Adult Education program.

Integrated Education and Training (IET) provides an important mechanism for Adult Education programs to accelerate attainment of such credentials. Under 34 C.F.R. § 463.36, an IET program must contain three components:

1. Adult education and literacy activities;
2. Workforce preparation activities; and
3. Workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

These components must be integrated in accordance with federal requirements and organized for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE), in Program Memorandum 26-5, further emphasized that increasing credential attainment alone is insufficient. States should establish criteria to determine whether credentials possess genuine labor market value and should align credential policies across education and workforce programs.
OCTAE identified six principal considerations for determining credential value:

- Labor-market demand;
- Industry recognition;
- Portability;
- Stackability;
- Labor-market outcomes; and
- Accessibility and cost-reasonableness.

This Program Memorandum adopts those principles for Alabama Adult Education and integrates them with Alabama's existing credential quality infrastructure.

B. Alabama Credential Quality Infrastructure

Alabama has established a statewide framework for identifying credentials and career pathways that provide value to learners, employers, and taxpayers.

The Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP**)** is charged with using labor market information to identify in-demand career pathways and with supporting statewide and regional compendia of valuable credentials. Alabama law also establishes industry-informed processes for connecting credentials and competencies to occupations and career pathways.

The Alabama Committee on Credential Quality and Transparency (ACCQT) establishes the Alabama Credential Registry as a virtual repository of state credential and competency data and defines transparency around structured, open, linked, interoperable, and durable formats. State law further requires the development of a list of credentials aligned to in-demand occupations using the credential evaluation system established through the ACCCP.

Together, these structures provide Alabama with a foundation for moving from a system that simply counts credentials to one that distinguishes credentials according to their labor market value. The Adult Education Division will use this existing statewide infrastructure rather than establish a separate credential approval system that duplicates the work of the ACCCP.

III. Policy

A. Definition of a Non-Degree Credential of Value

For purposes of Alabama Adult Education, a Non-Degree Credential of Value (NDCV) is a recognized postsecondary credential, other than an associate or baccalaureate degree, that:

1. Documents the attainment of measurable technical or occupational competencies;
2. Is recognized by employers, industry, government, or another appropriate third-party credentialing entity;
3. Is connected to an occupation or occupational cluster with demonstrated labor market value;
4. Provides evidence of an individual's qualifications to obtain employment or advance within an occupation or career pathway; and
5. Meets the quality requirements established by this Program Memorandum.

NDCVs may include:

- Industry-recognized certifications;
- Industry-recognized certificates;
- Occupational licenses recognized by Alabama or the federal government;
- Certificates of completion from Registered Apprenticeship programs;
- Postsecondary technical certificates that do not constitute degrees; and
- Other recognized postsecondary credentials determined by the Adult Education Division to satisfy WIOA requirements and Alabama's credential quality framework.

B. Credentials That Do Not Qualify

A certificate of participation, attendance, course completion, employability, or general workforce readiness does not constitute an NDCV merely because it is called a credential or certificate. Unless independently determined to satisfy the requirements for a recognized postsecondary credential under WIOA and this policy, the following shall not be treated as NDCVs:

- Certificates of attendance or participation;
- Certificates issued solely by an individual Adult Education provider for completing a course;
- General employability or work-readiness certificates that do not document measurable technical or occupational skills;
- Digital badges that document participation rather than demonstrated occupational competency;
- Employer-specific training certificates with no demonstrated value outside the issuing employer;
- Credentials for which no valid and reliable assessment of required competencies exists; and
- Credentials that have been discontinued, expired, or removed from applicable state credential lists.

Such credentials may remain valuable instructional milestones or measures of progress and may be reported when otherwise authorized, but they shall not be represented as NDCVs.

C. Credential Quality Standards

An NDCV supported by the Adult Education Division should satisfy the following quality standards.

1. Labor-Market Demand

The credential must prepare an individual for an occupation or occupational cluster for which there is demonstrated employer demand.

Preference shall be given to credentials aligned with:

- Statewide or regional in-demand occupations identified through the ACCCP;
- High-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations recognized by Alabama;
- Priority industries identified through state or regional workforce strategies; or
- Documented local employer demand supported by reliable labor-market evidence.

Local demand may supplement statewide and regional data but shall not, standing alone, override a statewide determination that a credential lacks labor-market value.

2. Industry Recognition

The credential must be recognized by an appropriate industry, professional, governmental, or credentialing body and must represent competencies relevant to employment in the associated occupation.

Recognition may be demonstrated through:

- State or federal licensure requirements;
- Recognition by a nationally or statewide recognized industry association;
- Employer hiring requirements or preferences;
- Industry-sector partnerships;
- Registered Apprenticeship standards; or
- Other documented employer validation.

3. Competency Validation

The credential must provide valid and reliable evidence that the learner has mastered measurable technical or occupational competencies.

Whenever practicable, those competencies should be mapped to:

- Applicable industry competency models;
- O*NET occupations;
- Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes;
- Alabama career pathways;
- ACCCP competency frameworks; and
- Postsecondary programs into which the credential may articulate or stack.

4. Portability

The credential should be recognized across multiple employers and, when applicable, across geographic regions.

Credentials limited to a single employer should generally not qualify unless the Adult Education Division determines that exceptional labor-market circumstances justify their use as part of a broader pathway leading to a portable credential.

5. Stackability
Whenever practicable, an NDCV should provide documented progression toward one or more higher-level credentials, certificates, degrees, or Registered Apprenticeship certificates of completion.

A credential may nevertheless qualify when it represents the terminal or sole recognized credential required for entry into or advancement within a particular occupation.

6. Labor-Market Outcomes
There should be reasonable evidence that attainment of the credential is associated with positive employment outcomes, including one or more of the following:

- Employment in a related occupation;
- Increased earnings;
- Advancement within an occupation;
- Increased likelihood of employment;
- Entry into a Registered Apprenticeship;
- Progression to additional education or training; or
- A measurable wage premium relative to similarly situated individuals without the credential.

As Alabama's longitudinal data capacity expands, actual employment and wage outcomes shall increasingly inform continued approval of credentials.

7. Accessibility and Cost-Reasonableness
The time and cost required to earn the credential must be reasonable in relation to its expected employment and earnings benefits.

The Division may consider:

- Tuition and training costs;
- Examination fees;
- Required equipment and materials;
- Time to completion;
- Credential renewal costs;
- Learner transportation or geographic barriers;
- Availability of testing locations;
- Availability of training in rural areas; and
- Expected wages and employment outcomes.

IV. Alignment with the ACCCP and Alabama Credential Registry
The Adult Education Division shall not maintain an independent credential system that unnecessarily duplicates the statewide work of the ACCCP.

Accordingly:

1. Credentials approved through the ACCCP's applicable credential quality process and included in Alabama's credential infrastructure shall be presumed to satisfy the state-recognition component of this policy, subject to applicable WIOA requirements.
2. Adult Education programs shall prioritize credentials aligned with statewide or regional in-demand occupations and career pathways identified through the ACCCP.
3. Credentials supported through Adult Education should be published in or otherwise aligned with the Alabama Credential Registry when required or appropriate.
4. Where a credential is not currently included in the applicable statewide credential list or Registry, a local Adult Education provider may request review by the Adult Education Division.
5. The Adult Education Division may coordinate with ACCS, the ACCCP, appropriate technical advisory committees, the Alabama Department of Workforce, the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, employers, and other partners to seek review or validation of proposed credentials.
6. Approval by the Adult Education Division shall not substitute for ACCCP approval when Alabama law or another state program specifically requires ACCCP approval.

V. Adult Education Non-Degree Credentials of Value List

The Adult Education Division shall establish and maintain an Adult Education Non-Degree Credentials of Value List for credentials that may be promoted as NDCVs through Division-supported programming.

To the greatest extent practicable, the list shall be derived from and interoperable with Alabama's existing credential infrastructure rather than constitute a separate credential registry.

The list may identify:

- Credential name;
- Credential issuer;
- Associated SOC code or occupational cluster;
- Career pathway;
- Applicable industry sector;
- ACCCP status;
- Statewide or regional demand status;
- Credential type;
- Portability;
- Stackability;
- Postsecondary articulation, when available;
- Associated training program;
- Typical time to completion;
- Credential examination requirements;
- Available employment and wage information; and
- Applicable WIOA reporting status.

The Division may designate credentials as statewide, regional, provisional, or under review.

VI. Application to Integrated Education and Training
The Division's objective is for IET to function as an accelerated career pathway, rather than as occupational training appended to Adult Education instruction.

Accordingly, new, or substantially redesigned IET programs should be designed to lead to an NDCV whenever a recognized credential of value exists for the occupation or occupational cluster.

Beginning with the effective date established in Section XII, local programs proposing a new IET shall identify:

1. The target occupation or occupational cluster;
2. Applicable SOC code or codes;
3. The associated statewide or regional in-demand career pathway;
4. The NDCV or NDCVs embedded in or resulting from the program;
5. The entity issuing each credential;
6. The occupational competencies measured by the credential;
7. Evidence of employer or industry recognition;
8. How the credential is portable and, when applicable, stackable;
9. Postsecondary or Registered Apprenticeship pathways available following completion;
10. The funding source for each component of the IET; and
11. The manner in which credential attainment and subsequent employment outcomes will be tracked.

An IET for an occupation for which no appropriate NDCV exists may be approved when the local provider demonstrates that the program otherwise meets federal requirements and provides a compelling career advancement pathway. Such approval shall be documented by the Division.

VII. Funding and Allowable Costs
The designation of a credential as an NDCV does not, by itself, establish that every cost associated with obtaining the credential is allowable under AEFLA or any other funding source.

All expenditures remain subject to:

- WIOA;
- AEFLA;
- 34 C.F.R. Part 463;
- 2 C.F.R. Part 200;
- Applicable federal and state grant conditions;
- ACCS fiscal policies; and
- Division guidance.

When allowable under the applicable funding source, Adult Education programs may support reasonable and necessary costs associated with approved NDCVs, including instructional costs, contextualized curriculum, assessments, examinations, instructional materials, and other approved costs necessary to support successful credential attainment.

Local programs are strongly encouraged to braid funding with WIOA Title I, SNAP Employment and Training, TANF, Perkins V, Workforce Pell, institutional workforce funds, employer contributions, scholarships, philanthropic resources, and other lawful sources so that AEFLA resources are concentrated on the Adult Education and literacy components for which they are intended.

VIII. Credential Attainment and WIOA Performance Accountability

Local programs shall distinguish between:

1. A credential or certificate that is useful to the learner;
2. A credential approved by Alabama as an NDCV; and
3. A credential that satisfies the federal definition and reporting requirements for the WIOA recognized postsecondary credential attainment indicator.

Only credentials satisfying applicable federal requirements may be reported as recognized postsecondary credentials for WIOA performance accountability purposes. The Division shall issue technical assistance, data definitions, and reporting procedures to ensure consistent treatment of credentials in the Adult Education management information system.

Local programs shall maintain sufficient documentation to establish:

- The credential earned;
- The issuing entity;
- Date of attainment;
- Participant identity;
- Associated education or training program;
- Postsecondary training enrollment, when applicable;
- Credential verification; and
- Other documentation required by WIOA or National Reporting System guidance.

IX. Career Pathway and Postsecondary Transition

NDCVs shall be used as on ramps to economic mobility, not as endpoints that unnecessarily limit continued education.

Local Adult Education programs shall therefore incorporate career navigation into IET and other credential-bearing programming and, whenever practicable, establish clear transitions from an NDCV to:

- A higher-level industry credential;
- An ACCS short-term certificate;
- A credit-bearing certificate;
- An associate degree;
- A Registered Apprenticeship;
- Workforce Pell-eligible training; or
- Employment with documented opportunities for advancement.

Adult Education providers should work with their host colleges to establish articulation, prior-learning assessment, or other mechanisms through which demonstrated competencies and industry credentials may translate into academic credit when institutionally and academically appropriate.

X. Continuous Review and Return on Investment
Credential value is not permanent. Changes in technology, employer practices, licensure requirements, occupational demand, wages, and industry standards may increase or diminish the value of a credential over time.

The Adult Education Division shall therefore periodically review NDCVs using available education and workforce outcome information.

Review should consider:

- Number of participants enrolled;
- Credential attempt rate;
- Credential attainment rate;
- Program completion rate;
- Employment following participation;
- Employment in a related occupation;
- Median earnings following exit;
- Wage progression;
- Transition to postsecondary education;
- Attainment of subsequent credentials;
- Employer demand;
- Employer validation; and
- Cost per credential attained.

The Division should coordinate, when feasible, with Alabama's longitudinal education and workforce data systems to evaluate actual employment and earnings outcomes associated with credential attainment.

Credentials may be removed, suspended, or placed under review when evidence demonstrates that they no longer satisfy this policy.

XI. Local Program Responsibilities
Each local Adult Education program shall:

1. Review its existing credential-bearing programming against this policy;
2. Identify the credentials currently supported through Adult Education activities;
3. Determine whether each credential qualifies as an NDCV and a WIOA recognized postsecondary credential;
4. Prioritize credentials connected to ACCCP identified in-demand occupations and career pathways;
5. Ensure new IET proposals identify an associated NDCV whenever one exists;
6. Maintain documentation sufficient to verify credential attainment;
7. Accurately report recognized postsecondary credentials for WIOA accountability;
8. Develop relationships with employers and workforce partners to validate credential relevance;
9. Establish postsecondary and employment transitions for credential earners; and
10. Participate in Division credential review, data collection, and continuous improvement activities.

XII. Implementation

Implementation shall occur in phases.

Phase I: Inventory and Classification

The Adult Education Division shall develop a statewide inventory of credentials currently offered, embedded, purchased, reimbursed, or otherwise supported through Adult Education programs.

Each credential shall be classified as:

- NDCV: Approved
- Provisional NDCV
- Credential/Certificate: Non-NDCV
- Under Review

Phase II: Alignment

The Division shall align approved NDCVs with:

- ACCCP credential determinations;
- Alabama Credential Registry information;
- Statewide and regional in-demand occupations;
- SOC codes;
- Career pathways;
- IET programs;
- ACCS credit and non-credit programs;
- Registered Apprenticeship opportunities; and
- Workforce Pell-eligible programs, when applicable.

Phase III: Outcomes and Continuous Improvement

As sufficient data become available, the Division shall incorporate employment, wage, completion, credential attainment, postsecondary transition, and return-on-investment information into credential review.

The long-term objective is to establish a performance-based credential portfolio in which Adult Education investment increasingly follows demonstrated value to learners and employers.

XIII. State-Imposed Requirement

Where provisions of this memorandum establish requirements beyond minimum federal requirements under WIOA or AEFLA, those provisions constitute Alabama Adult Education Division policy and shall be identified and administered as state-imposed requirements consistent with applicable federal law.

Nothing in this Program Memorandum alters, supersedes, or waives a requirement imposed by federal statute, regulation, federal grant conditions, Alabama law, or ACCS Board of Trustees policy, or other controlling authority.

XIV. WIOA Credential Attainment Indicator

A. Purpose and Application

The Credential Attainment Indicator is one of the primary indicators of performance established under WIOA § 116 and 34 C.F.R. § 463.155. For Adult Education programs, the indicator measures the percentage of applicable participants who attain either:

1. A secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; or
2. A recognized postsecondary credential, during participation in the program or within one year after exit.

The Credential Attainment Indicator is an exit-based performance measure. Accordingly, it is distinct from the Measurable Skill Gains indicator, which measures interim progress during participation.

For purposes of Adult Education performance management, the Alabama Adult Education Division shall distinguish between the Secondary Credential Indicator and the Postsecondary Credential Indicator as two pathways contributing to the overall WIOA Credential Attainment Indicator.

B. Secondary Credential Indicator

For the secondary credential component of the Credential Attainment Indicator, the denominator includes participants who:

1. Did not possess a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent at program entry;
2. Were enrolled in a secondary education program at or above the ninth-grade level during participation; and
3. Subsequently exited the Adult Education program.

A participant may satisfy the credential component by attaining, during participation or within one year after exit:

- A secondary school diploma recognized by the State; or
- A State-recognized equivalent of a secondary school diploma, including an Alabama-recognized high school equivalency credential.

However, attainment of the secondary credential alone is not sufficient to constitute a successful outcome under the WIOA Credential Attainment Indicator.

Under WIOA § 116 and 34 C.F.R. § 463.155, a participant who earns a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent is counted as a successful credential outcome only when, within one year after exit, the participant also:

1. Obtains employment; or
2. Enrolls in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential.

Accordingly, Alabama Adult Education programs shall treat attainment of a secondary school credential as the first step in a two-part performance outcome.

Local programs shall not consider their responsibility for the Credential Attainment Indicator complete when a participant earns a GED, HiSET, adult high school diploma, or other State-recognized secondary

credential. Programs must implement transition and follow-up strategies designed to connect secondary credential earners to employment or postsecondary education and training.

The Division shall therefore evaluate local performance based not only on the number of secondary credentials earned, but also on the percentage of secondary credential earners who subsequently achieve the required employment or postsecondary transition outcome.

C. Postsecondary Credential Indicator

For the recognized postsecondary credential component of the Credential Attainment Indicator, the applicable Adult Education population consists of participants who, during the program year:

1. Were also enrolled in a postsecondary education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential; and
2. Exited both the postsecondary education or training program and the Adult Education program.

A participant may satisfy the postsecondary credential component by attaining a recognized postsecondary credential during participation or within one year after exit.

For purposes of WIOA, a recognized postsecondary credential may include:

- An industry-recognized certificate or certification;
- A certificate of completion of a Registered Apprenticeship;
- An occupational license recognized by Alabama or the federal government;
- An occupational or technical certificate documenting measurable technical or industry/occupational skills;
- An associate degree; or
- A baccalaureate degree.

A credential must document the attainment of measurable technical or industry/occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an industry or occupation to qualify as a recognized postsecondary credential.

Certificates of attendance, participation, general work readiness, or completion that do not document measurable technical or occupational skills shall not be reported as recognized postsecondary credentials.

D. Relationship to Non-Degree Credentials of Value

The Alabama Adult Education Division shall use the Non-Degree Credentials of Value framework established by this Program Memorandum to strengthen performance on the postsecondary component of the Credential Attainment Indicator. However, an NDCV designation and WIOA reporting eligibility are related but distinct determinations.

An NDCV represents Alabama's determination that a credential possesses sufficient labor-market and career value to warrant Adult Education support or prioritization. A WIOA-recognized postsecondary credential must independently satisfy the federal statutory and regulatory requirements for reporting under the Credential Attainment Indicator.

Accordingly, credentials supported through Adult Education should, whenever practicable, satisfy both standards:

State Value Standard: The credential satisfies Alabama's NDCV quality criteria, including labor-market demand, industry recognition, competency validation, portability, stackability, labor-market outcomes, and accessibility and cost-reasonableness.

Federal Accountability Standard: The credential satisfies the WIOA definition of a recognized postsecondary credential and applicable federal reporting requirements.

The Division shall identify within the Adult Education Non-Degree Credentials of Value List whether each credential is eligible to be reported as a WIOA recognized postsecondary credential.

E. State Performance Expectations
Alabama Adult Education shall establish a performance-management strategy that separately monitors the two components of the Credential Attainment Indicator.

At a minimum, the Division shall monitor:

Secondary Credential Performance

- Number and percentage of eligible participants attaining a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent;
- Percentage of secondary credential earners employed within one year after exit;
- Percentage of secondary credential earners enrolled in education or training leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit; and
- Percentage satisfying the complete WIOA secondary credential outcome.

Postsecondary Credential Performance

- Number and percentage of Adult Education participants co-enrolled in postsecondary education or training;
- Number and percentage of applicable participants attaining a recognized postsecondary credential;
- Number and percentage attaining an approved NDCV;
- Credential attainment by credential, occupation, career pathway, provider, and region; and
- Employment and earnings outcomes associated with credential attainment when data are available.

The Division may establish state performance targets, dashboards, monitoring thresholds, or other accountability measures for these indicators in addition to federally negotiated WIOA performance levels.

F. Programmatic Priority: From Secondary Credential to Postsecondary Credential
The Adult Education Division's long-term objective is to increase the number of participants who progress through both levels of credential attainment rather than treating secondary credential attainment as the terminal objective of Adult Education.

Whenever appropriate to the needs and goals of the participant, local programs should begin postsecondary and career pathway planning before the participant earns a secondary credential. Programs should use Integrated Education and Training, concurrent enrollment, transition services, Ability-to-Benefit pathways, Workforce Pell, WIOA Title I training, SNAP Employment and Training, TANF, Registered Apprenticeship, ACCS credit and non-credit programs, and other available resources to minimize the time between secondary credential attainment and entry into postsecondary education, training, or employment.

G. Co-Enrollment as a Credential Attainment Strategy
The Division shall prioritize co-enrollment as a primary strategy for improving the Postsecondary Credential Indicator.

Local programs should establish processes to identify Adult Education participants who can concurrently enroll in postsecondary education or occupational training leading to an approved NDCV.

IET programs should be structured, whenever practicable, so that participants simultaneously progress toward:

1. Adult education and literacy objectives;
2. A secondary credential, when needed;
3. Postsecondary technical or occupational competencies; and
4. A recognized postsecondary credential or approved NDCV.

The Division shall work with ACCS institutions and workforce partners to reduce unnecessary sequencing in which participants are required to complete Adult Education before beginning occupational or postsecondary training.

H. Data Quality and Follow-Up
Accurate reporting of the Credential Attainment Indicator requires local programs to maintain sufficient information regarding participant education, training, credential attainment, employment, and postsecondary enrollment following exit.
Local programs shall comply with Division procedures for documenting and validating:

- Secondary credential attainment;
- Postsecondary education and training enrollment;
- Postsecondary credential attainment;
- Credential type and issuing entity;
- Program exit;
- Employment following exit; and
- Postsecondary enrollment following exit.

Attention shall be given to follow-up of participants who earn a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent because employment or qualifying postsecondary enrollment within one year after exit is necessary for the secondary credential to count as a successful outcome under the federal Credential Attainment Indicator.

The Division shall use available administrative data matching, longitudinal data systems, postsecondary enrollment records, unemployment insurance wage records, and other permissible data sources to reduce reliance on participant self-reporting and improve the completeness and reliability of credential performance data.

I. Relationship to Program Quality

Credential Attainment shall not be treated solely as a federal compliance measure. It shall serve as an indicator of whether Alabama Adult Education programs successfully move participants from foundational education into postsecondary education, occupational skill attainment, employment, and economic mobility.

Accordingly, the Division shall use the Secondary and Postsecondary Credential Indicators, together with Measurable Skill Gains, employment, earnings, postsecondary transition, and other performance information, to evaluate program quality and inform technical assistance, monitoring, program improvement, and resource allocation.

XV. Effective Date

This Program Memorandum is effective October 1, 2026. Existing credential-bearing programs may continue through the initial review period established by the Adult Education Division. New IET programs proposed after the effective date shall comply with the credential review and alignment requirements contained in this memorandum.

The Division may issue additional implementation guidance, technical assistance, credential lists, forms, data definitions, and procedures necessary to administer this policy.

XVI. Questions and Technical Assistance

Questions regarding implementation of this Program Memorandum should be directed to the Alabama Community College System Adult Education Division.

The Adult Education Division will provide technical assistance to local programs regarding credential classification, IET alignment, federal performance reporting, credential documentation, and the development of career pathways leading from Adult Education to postsecondary education, Registered Apprenticeship, and employment.

XVII. References

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Pub. L. 113-128, including §§ 3(52), 116, and Title II—Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.
- 34 C.F.R. Part 463, including §§ 463.35–463.38.

- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, Program Memorandum 26-5, Strengthening Recognized Postsecondary Credentials in Career and Technical Education, May 12, 2026.
- U.S. Departments of Labor and Education, TEGL 10-16, Change 3, Performance Accountability Guidance for WIOA Core Programs.
- Code of Alabama § 41-29-333, Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways.
- Alabama Credential Quality and Transparency Act, Code of Alabama §§ 41-29-350 et seq.
- Alabama Terminal on Linking and Analyzing Statistics on Career Pathways Act, Code of Alabama §§ 41-29-360 et seq.
- Alabama Community College System Adult Education Division, Program Memorandum 26-1, Guidelines on the Preparation, Distribution, and Placement of Division Program Memoranda, August 11, 2026.