**A Brief Statement from the Industry-Based Certification Advisory Council**

**Regarding the 2023 Inventory of Industry-Recognized Credentials**

The Industry-Based Certification Advisory Council[[1]](#footnote-1) (Council) offers the following observations regarding the industry-based certifications (IBCs) included in the 2023 Inventory of Industry-Recognized Credentials (Inventory). The Council recognizes that while the size and diversity of the Texas economy support an extensive list of IBCs, determining the value and quality of each IBC is an important and necessary next step. With value and quality in mind, the Council proposes the following:

* A tracking system should be developed to determine which IBCs are seldom used. When identified, the IBC should be suspended until there is a proven need. Exceptions can be made to meet specific regional employment needs.
* The Tri-Agency partners[[2]](#footnote-2) should research and evaluate labor market outcomes for each IBC. IBCs identified as relevant and valuable to the labor market should stay on the list and be prioritized.
* The Tri-Agency partners should identify core skills represented by an IBC and confirm that those skills meet employers’ needs.

In addition, the Council supports the creation of tiered certifications, also known as stackable credentials. The tiered approach will enable Texas colleges to build upon a high school student’s capstone CTE experience and will prevent a student from thinking that an entry-level credential will lead to high-wage employment. The Council also believes that some certifications must be stacked. For example, a certification such as OSHA 10 should be included as part of a series of stackable credentials.

The Council recognizes the Texas Education Agency’s need for a separate list to meet requirements established in [law](https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex._educ._code_section_39.053) and [rule](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=2&ch=74&rl=1003). The Council also recognizes that its Inventory will not undergo the same level of review as the TEA list and does not, for example, guarantee TEKS conformity. Ideally, there would only be one official IBC list for Texas, but until that is achieved, the Council encourages all stakeholders to work together in aligning labor market needs with credentials offered in high school CTE programs. If the goal of one official IBC list is ever realized, the list should be a living document that can be quickly changed as industry needs change. When a quick response is not needed, the Council recommends the Inventory be reviewed once every two years (as opposed to its current charge of reviewing each year) and revised to ensure alignment with labor market needs.

Finally, in its future work, the Council believes greater value can be added to the Inventory by

* including information about which IBCs are in greatest demand in Texas,
* listing an IBC with the estimated number of jobs requiring that IBC and the number of employees needed mid- and long-term, and
* creating a fast-track option for adding an IBC(s) to the Inventory. A fast-track option gives economic development entities assurances that future employees can be quickly trained and credentialed to meet an area’s current and future labor market needs.

1. The Council was established through passage of HB 3938, 87th Texas Legislature, Regular Session. Details about the Council and their work can be viewed at [Texas Labor Code, Chapter 312](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/LA/htm/LA.312.htm). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Tri-Agency Initiative is a partnership across Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Education Agency, and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)