

An Act to Expand Incentivizing the Awarding of Industry-Recognized Credentials H.564

Why does MA need to ensure that more students earn industry-recognized credentials?

A pervasive shortage of skilled workers is threatening Massachusetts employers' ability to expand and grow. At the same time, too many students fail to earn the degree or credential they need to enter, thrive, and advance in the Commonwealth's knowledge-based workforce. Expanding opportunities for students to earn high value industry-recognized credentials (IRCs) in high school that are linked to local labor market demand will help to address these challenges.

Students who earn industry certifications have an advantage finding high-demand jobs with good wages because the certifications are globally portable and valuable to employers. Often, these industry certifications are "stackable," which means multiple credentials can be accumulated over time to build up an individual's qualifications to pursue a career pathway or another postsecondary credential. The skills embedded in certification courses often can transfer to multiple career pathways, retaining their relevance as the student learns and evolves their career interests. The process of earning an industry certification allows students to experience the real-world demands of work in a practical way.

Industry-recognized credentials by the numbers

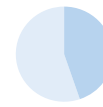
We know that earning an IRC in high school can be impactful: a study of states that enacted strong incentives specifically for high school students to earn IRCs found that students who earned an IRC were more likely to:

- Graduate from high school on time;
- Attain an associate degree; and
- Graduate from a community college and enroll in a four-year institution.¹

And we also know that attaining an IRC gives graduates a significant advantage in the workforce, where they are:

- More likely to be employed;
- More likely to earn more money; and
- More likely to advance in high-growth industries such as health care and manufacturing.²

THE FACTS



Only **44%** of MA ninth graders go on to **earn a degree or certificate within six years** of graduating high school.³

- MassINC projects **the state's working-age, college-educated labor force will fall by about 192,000 by 2030.**
- Mass High Tech Council reports **35,000 average monthly tech occupation postings** over the past year and **only 6,000 hires** over the same period.

What would this bill do?

An Act to Expand Incentivizing the Awarding of Industry-Recognized Credentials (H.564) creates a financial incentive that would provide an extra \$1,000 to districts for every high school student who earns an IRC for an occupation that has high employment value or is recognized by an institution of higher education.

STUDENT PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS COALITION MEMBERS



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ENDNOTES

- 1 Noronha G., O’Kane L., Taska B., Walsh M. *Where Credentials Meet the Market: State Case Studies on the Effect of High School Industry Credentials on Educational and Labor Market Outcomes*. ExcelsinEd and Burning Glass Technologies. June 2019. [excelsined.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ExcelsinEdBurningGlassTechnologies.CredentialsMatter.WhereCredentialsMeetTheMarket.June2019.pdf](https://www.excelsined.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ExcelsinEdBurningGlassTechnologies.CredentialsMatter.WhereCredentialsMeetTheMarket.June2019.pdf)
- 2 Clay J., Valentine J., *Non-Degree Credentials Provide Value for Adults in the Labor Market*. Lumina Foundation and DVP-Praxis Ltd. [luminafoundation.org/resource/non-degree-credentials-provide-value-for-adults-in-the-labor-market/](https://www.luminafoundation.org/resource/non-degree-credentials-provide-value-for-adults-in-the-labor-market/)
- 3 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. *DART Detail: Success after High School Online Dashboard*. March 2023. [app.powerbigov.us/](https://www.app.powerbigov.us/)