

Utah First Credential Program: Launching Pathways to College, Careers, and Opportunity



The First Credential Program ensures each Utah student has the opportunity to graduate high school with a meaningful, industry-aligned credential that supports college credit, career readiness, and lifelong learning. The initiative aligns K-12, higher education, and employers to create a cohesive, statewide talent pipeline.

Student-Centered Impact: A Launchpad to College, Career, and Life

Each Utah student graduates with a diploma and the opportunity to earn a high-value First Credential that shows readiness for college and career.

- Stackable, transferable pathways save time and accelerate credential completion.
- Scholarships reduce college costs and expand access to postsecondary programs.
- Advising and navigation tools help students and families connect education to jobs.

Schools as Gateways to Opportunity

Utah schools are equipped to deliver high-quality First Credential programs without added burden.

- State funding and implementation grants support local roll out.
- Planning tools and technical assistance ensure statewide scalability.
- Partnerships with higher education and employers expand real-world learning.

Community & Industry Impact: Powering Utah's Economy

The program connects education and industry to fuel statewide innovation, workforce readiness, and economic mobility.

- Education is aligned with regional and statewide high-demand sectors.
- A predictable talent pipeline is built for employers and regional economies.
- Embedded labor-market data and employer validation ensures credentials reflect real value.

Key Components



Pathways & Learning Experiences

Students earn credentials through Concurrent Enrollment, CTE, Technical College programs, Youth Apprenticeships, or Industry-Recognized Credentials.



Scholarships & Incentives

Students receive financial rewards that encourage completion, persistence, and continued progress along credential pathways. Funds can cover education-related expenses.



Data, Advising, & Continuous Improvement

Participation, outcomes, and opportunities for improvement are tracked to strengthen advising, career mapping, and system performance.



Employer & Industry Engagement

Employers validate credentials, mentor students, validate workforce demand, and connect learning to real career opportunities.

Cross-Sector Collaboration: Partners in Action

Utah's First Credential program is powered by partnerships. Schools, colleges, employers, and state leaders work together to turn classrooms into career pathways and make opportunity a shared reality for each student.

- » **LEAs** guide students through credential pathways and provide local support.
- » **Higher Education** offers stackable, transferable credits and credentials to high school learners.
- » **Employers & Industry Associations** validate credential relevance, co-design programs, and provide work-based learning and mentorship.
- » **Talent Ready Utah** connects schools, employers, and higher education partners to strengthen regional collaboration.
- » **State Partners & USBE** administer scholarships, manage data infrastructure, and support continuous improvement.



Implementation: Building a Connected Ecosystem

Year 1 | Build the System: Launch implementation plan, establish review committee, finalize Master Credential List, evaluate data systems, and identify staffing gaps.

Year 2 | Align & Strengthen: Enhance communications, support regional learning hubs, increase educator resources, and review industry alignment.

Year 3 | Review & Refine: Assess credit mapping and articulation, update Master Credential List, re-evaluate scholarships and incentives, and refresh the Master Plan.