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PRESS RELEASE

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**California Community Colleges Led National Drive to Better Track
Information on Workforce Credentials and Bridge Skills Gap**

First convening of multi-state coalition held in Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. -- The California Community Colleges along with North Carolina's community college system today launched a national workforce credentials initiative to develop common data standards and data sharing agreements among industry and professional certifying bodies, an effort seen as critical to improving alignment between employers and workforce training providers.

The New America Foundation hosted the first meeting of the Workforce Credentials Coalition, representing more than 20 states working to arrive at common data definitions necessary to improve preparation of a skilled workforce that meets the needs of today's labor market.

"As a system, we strive to demonstrate transparency in data that began with our [California Student Success Scorecard](#) and [Salary Surfer](#)," said California Community Colleges Chancellor Brice W. Harris. "This work is taking place as our system concurrently rolls out the [LaunchBoard](#), a unified framework of data for a more competitive workforce focused on student outcomes and skills building."

"As exciting opportunities increase for community colleges to offer programs leading to industry recognized credentials, we are also faced with challenges as many funders require colleges to collect and report on credential attainment data," says Dr. R. Scott Ralls, president of the North Carolina Community College System. "This data is difficult, if not impossible, to collect. Our colleges need a single repository for accessing all third party credential data. This is one of the goals of the Coalition, to move toward a secure, accessible national credential data warehouse."

The Coalition is tackling an increasingly important blind spot in educational data systems. As non-degree credentials like industry certifications become more important to job seekers and employers, it is essential that educational institutions establish data-sharing relationships with certifying bodies to ensure their programs are well aligned with industry and professional standards.

The Coalition is dedicated to developing shared strategies to collect and exchange data to the benefit of

students, employers, and institutions. "Tracking industry certifications is important for students across the country as we better align education and the needs of industry. We hope with this coalition to tell the story on how validated credentials are beneficial to our students entering the workforce," said Van Ton-Quinlivan, vice chancellor of workforce and economic development for California Community Colleges.

[Credential Data Pioneers, Forging New Partnerships to Measure Certifications and Licenses](#), a newly-issued report by the [Workforce Data Quality Campaign](#), highlights the opportunities that data-sharing between private certifying bodies and community colleges offers to improve programs and student outcomes. The report features a case study about the Workforce Credentials Coalition.

"It's very exciting to see so many states come together around a common agenda on workforce credentials and how better data can help them improve their programs," states Mary Alice McCarthy, Senior Policy Analyst of the New America Foundation.

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor's Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>.

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Regards,

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