

WORKCRED INPUT

Federal Government Request for Information: Establishing a Government Effectiveness Advanced Research (GEAR) Center **Comments Submitted: September 12, 2018**

[Workcred](#), an affiliate of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), wishes to provide input in response to the federal government's request for information (RFI) about establishing a Government Effectiveness Advanced Research (GEAR) Center as a non-governmental, public-private partnership to address operational and strategic challenges facing the federal government.

Workcred's mission is to strengthen workforce quality by improving the credentialing system, ensuring its ongoing relevance, and preparing employers, workers, educators, and governments to use it effectively. Like ANSI, Workcred shares a commitment to addressing key issues impacting the nation through public-private partnerships. Workcred convenes a Government Credentialing Network (GCN) on a regular basis, bringing together representatives from federal agencies and vendors to discuss related credentialing trends and developments. More than 150 representatives have participated in the GCN, whose objectives, among others, are to:

- Showcase federal credentialing models and share best practices to build greater consistency among federal agencies
- Identify the roles of industry and professional organizations in creating credentials and relationships between federal government and private sector initiatives
- Explore trends and practices through the analysis of big data and new statistics from federal surveys including the Current Population Survey and the Adult Training and Education Survey
- Communicate findings and information with the broader community

Specifically, Workcred would like to provide input on Question #7 in the RFI regarding models, approaches, and opportunities that should inform an anticipated early focus on reskilling and upskilling federal employees. Innovative and vibrant public-private partnerships have proven successful in the credentialing space, and offer compelling models that the GEAR Center should consider.

Well-developed, quality micro-credentials can provide agile solutions to reskill and upskill employees in discrete content areas quickly. One example currently underway will offer a micro-credential for public-sector risk managers. Developed by the Association for Federal Enterprise Risk Management (AFERM), the Risk Management Society (RIMS), and Professional Testing Inc., this public-private sector partnership model started with buy-in to and endorsement of the core risk management competencies established by an existing certification, the RIMS-CRMP Certified Risk Management Professional.

The competencies required of the micro-credential focus on the work of federal employees in risk management, *across* agencies. The micro-credential followed acceptable industry standards for the development of credentialing programs, including a job task analysis; the identification of unique and/or specialized knowledge from subject matter experts (SMEs) applicable across agencies in which risk management professionals work; input from SMEs who collectively represent the breadth and scope of the content area; and the development of an assessment (examination) that is valid, reliable, follows acceptable psychometric practices, and will be maintained and updated with input from SMEs.

With the development of the RIMS-CRMP and wide acceptance of the competencies by stakeholders, the development of the micro-credential was streamlined as SMEs were able to focus on the “gaps” relative to the federal risk management work space. This model meets the general understanding of a micro-credential as a smaller, discrete, specialized opportunity for competency assessment for workers to achieve a level of proficiency in a skill or area, while at the same time remaining current in and/or advancing in their jobs. Given that this micro-credential is applicable to risk management professionals across federal agencies, the expectation of comparability and consistency among workers in risk management is a realistic one. *Full details about this micro-credential are available in the appendix.*

Another compelling public-private partnership model that the GEAR Center should consider is the U.S. General Services Administration's [Facilities Management Institute](#), which was created to implement the *Federal Buildings Personnel Training Act*. This cloud-based institute is a collaboration of government, industry, and academia to integrate and align all aspects of the facilities operations and management profession through continuous collaboration on core competencies, curriculum, continuing education, and knowledge networking. Competencies are reviewed on an annual basis to capture updates, and there is a tracking system for individuals and agencies. In combination with innovative and adaptive learning tools from private sector companies such as those highlighted by the [Association for Talent Development BEST Awards](#) program, this cloud-based system can serve as a model that could be scaled by the GEAR Center for applicability across agencies.

For high-demand skill training needs, the GEAR Center should look to the [National Institute of Standards and Technology \(NIST\) National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education \(NICE\) Cybersecurity Workforce Framework](#). Led by NIST, the NICE Workforce Framework is a partnership between government, the private sector, and academia focused on cybersecurity education, training, and workforce development. Cybersecurity is an evolving field in need of greater standardization and more specialized competencies. The NICE Workforce Framework helps employers and educational providers by providing a standardized approach for the development of the cybersecurity workforce, with a focus on broad categories of work, specialty areas, and a corresponding set of knowledge, skills, and abilities. This type of framework could be developed for other evolving skill areas.

Workcred believes that it is important to look to and build models that facilitate *dynamic* rather than *one-time* upskilling. Additionally, it is important to examine models that address skills that are cross-cutting and enable federal employees' ability to move between agencies based on achieved competencies. Functional areas such as acquisitions, financial management, and grant management – where there are clear competency requirements and a long history of using them – may also provide important cues and lessons learned for the GEAR Center in establishing cross-cutting models for federal agencies.

Consideration should be given to a centralized reporting system into the GEAR Center that has standardized metrics for things like accidents, identified problem areas, specific job vacancies, lack of expertise to complete projects, personnel assigned to jobs with little or no expertise due to emergency needs, etc. These should be reviewed on an annual basis to determine the highest priorities for upskilling current employees or for recruiting new talent into the federal system. In its September 2018 report, [2017 Hurricanes and Wildfires: Initial Observations on the Federal Response and Key Recovery Challenges](#), the U.S. Government Accountability Office announced that more than half of Federal Emergency Management Agency workers deployed to disasters were asked to do jobs they were not qualified to perform.

Thank you for the opportunity to input into the development of the GEAR Center. Should you require additional information, please contact Workcred's executive director, Roy Swift, at rsswift@workcred.org.

Micro-Credential: Public-Private Sector Partnership Model
RIMS Certified Risk Management Professional for Federal Government RIMS-CRMP-Fed™

I. Background:

The industry of risk management has a full-scope certification program developed and administered by The Risk Management Society (RIMS) the RIMS-CRMP Certified Risk Management Professional. Professional Testing, Inc. worked with RIMS to develop the RIMS-CRMP.

The scope of the RIMS-CRMP is as follows:

“A risk management professional is a partner who supports the organization to leverage the opportunities and uncertainties associated with its goals and objectives. They lead the development and implementation of risk management practices that enable the organization to make risk-effective decisions that create and sustain value.”

As a full-scope certification program, the RIMS-CRMP has eligibility requirements, an examination, recertification requirements and a Code of Ethics certified persons must uphold. The examination is 120 multiple-choice questions, and covers five domains:

1. Analyzing the Business Model
2. Designing Organizational Risk Strategies
3. Implementing the Risk Process
4. Developing Organizational Risk Competency
5. Supporting Decision Making

Individuals working in risk management who meet the eligibility requirements qualify to take the RIMS-CRMP certification examination, and then must meet the recertification requirements and uphold the Code of Ethics to remain certified and use the RIMS-CRMP designation. Information about the RIMS-CRMP can be found at www.rims.org/certification.

II. Need:

The [Association for Federal Enterprise Risk Management \(AFERM\)](#) is a professional organization dedicated to the advancement of federal enterprise risk management. AFERM wished to offer a “credential” for public-sector risk managers, with the scope of the credential to focus on the public-sector risk management professional as one who promotes the achievement of the agency’s mission, goals, and objectives by leading and supporting the development and implementation of risk management practices. The competencies required of this credential would focus on the work of federal employees in risk management, across agencies.

III. Methodology:

AFERM and RIMS partnered to develop the micro-credential, with each organization providing subject matter experts (SMEs) to participate in the planning and development of the public-sector risk management micro-credential. Professional Testing facilitated the development of the micro-credential, based on the agreement by both organizations that a micro-credential would be the best type of credential since the RIMS-CRMP already covered the full-scope of risk management. One of the considerations during planning was that federal employees hold the RIMS-CRMP to qualify for the micro-credential. This would assure a comprehensive understanding of risk management, and allow the micro-credential to focus on competencies applicable to the work of federal employees in risk management thereby reducing any redundancies between credentials.

Appendix to Workcred Comments

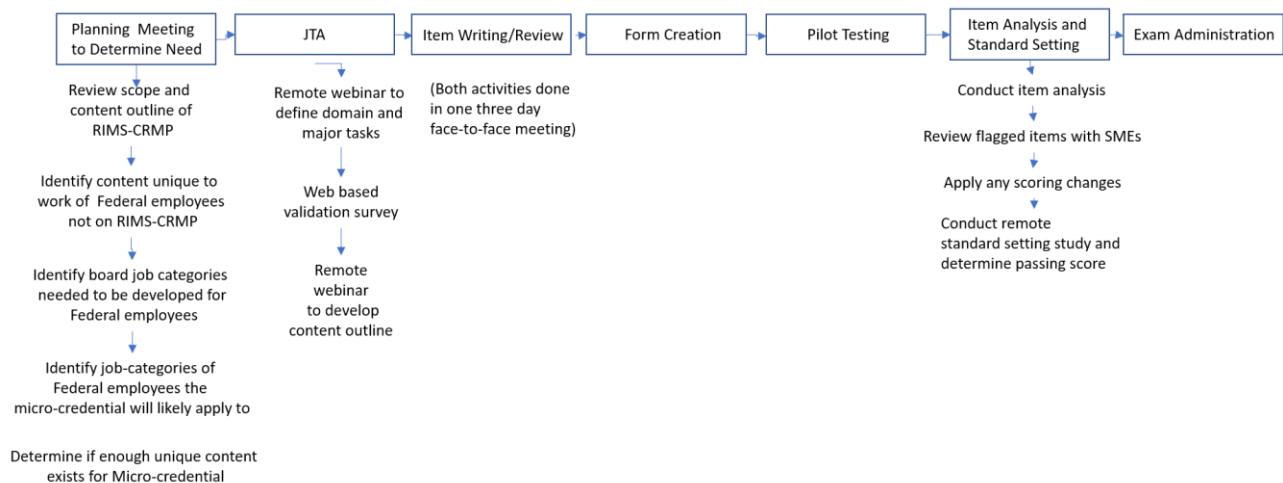
For reasons of continuity, RIMS provided SMEs who had participated in the development of the RIMS-CRMP certification, specifically with the Job-Task Analysis Study. A total of eight SMEs met for a one-day face-to-face planning meeting. Professional Testing facilitated the meeting, with the following objectives:

1. Review the job-description (scope) of the RIMS-CRMP Risk Management Professional and modify for the work of federal employees in risk management
2. Review the RIMS-CRMP content outline (examination blueprint) to identify content applicable to the work of federal employees in risk management
3. Identify content that is unique to the work of federal employees and not included in the RIMS-CRMP certification
4. Identify what content (broad job categories) needs to be developed for federal employees
5. Identify job-categories of federal employees the micro-credential will likely apply to.

At the completion of the meeting, it was determined that enough content unique to the work of federal employees existed for the development of an *assessment based micro-credential* (examination, not training.) It was of critical importance to the organizations that the micro-credential follow acceptable industry standards in the development of credentialing programs and assessments. The following practices were followed in the development of the micro-credential:

- Conceptualization of the job function as a smaller, discrete, specialized opportunity for skills/competency assessment
- Development from a credible approach such as a job-task analysis (JTA), hence the review of the RIMS-CRMP content outline end product of the JTA study
- Identification of unique and/or specialized knowledge must come from SMEs and be applicable across agencies in which risk management professionals work
- Inclusion of input from SMEs who collectively represent the breadth and scope of the content area
- Development of an assessment (examination) that is valid, reliable and follows acceptable psychometric practices
- Examination development is facilitated by a psychometrician and involves SMEs for content review, item-writing and review, and setting the passing score
- The examination is to be maintained and updated with input from SMEs

RIMS-CRMP-FED Micro-credential Development Flow Chart



Appendix to Workcred Comments

IV. Status:

The development of the micro-credential is nearing its completion, with candidates registered to “pilot” the examination. By piloting the examination, data will be gathered on the performance of each of the test questions (50 questions). Any items that do not meet psychometric rigor will not be scored, and will be revised and piloted prior to being administered on subsequent exams. Once the item statistics have been compiled and reviewed by a psychometrician, a passing score study to determine the passing point will be conducted. By the end of October 2018, the first “class” of RIMS-CRMP-Fed™ micro-credential holders will be announced, and the examination will be open to all test-takers.

V. Conclusion:

While the micro-credential is nearing completion of its development and has yet to be administered “live,” the approach to building what is unique to the work of federal risk management professionals from an established certification has resulted in a reduction of duplication of competencies and enabled the SMEs to focus on the specific competencies of job incumbents—not the entire job. With the development of the RIMS-CRMP and wide acceptance of the competencies by stakeholders, the development of the micro-credential was streamlined as SMEs were able to focus on the “gaps” relative to the federal risk management work space. While there are many different types of micro-credentials, this public-private sector partnership model started with buy-in to and endorsement of the core risk management competencies established by the RIMS-CRMP. Development of a micro-credential could then fill the gap for the federal workforce, be developed faster, eliminate duplication of competencies, and maximize resources in terms of time and money.

The bonus to federal risk management professionals is that this model meets the general understanding of a micro-credential as a smaller, discrete, specialized opportunity for competency assessment for workers to achieve a level of proficiency in a skill or area, while at the same time remaining current in and/or advancing in their jobs. Given that this micro-credential is applicable to risk management professionals across federal agencies, the expectation of comparability and consistency among workers in risk management is a realistic one.