

Competency-Based Certification (Community and NGO / Non-Profit Programs)

1. Competency Framework & Alignment
 - a. Organization has a clearly defined competency framework aligned with transferable skills (e.g., collaboration, creativity, problem solving, empathy, civic engagement).
 - b. Competencies are transparent and accessible to learners, families, and partners.
 - c. The framework is informed by community needs, student voice, and future-readiness skills.
2. Learning Design & Opportunities
 - a. Programs are intentionally designed to give students authentic, real-world opportunities to practice and demonstrate competencies.
 - b. Multiple pathways exist for students to demonstrate learning (projects, performances, community service, internships, creative products).
 - c. Learning experiences are inclusive and culturally responsive, honoring diverse backgrounds and ways of demonstrating competence.
3. Assessment & Evidence of Competency
 - a. Assessment methods include portfolios, exhibitions, performances, and applied projects, not just written work.
 - b. Rubrics or success criteria define proficiency levels for each competency.
 - c. Students collect and curate evidence of growth across experiences, with opportunities to reflect on and present their learning.
 - d. Reassessment or iterative opportunities are part of the process.
4. Feedback, Reflection & Agency
 - a. Feedback is timely, actionable, and collaborative (facilitator, peer, self).
 - b. Reflection is embedded, allowing students to consider personal growth, strengths, and next steps.
 - c. Learners set goals and have agency in choosing how they demonstrate competencies.
5. Recognition & Credentialing
 - a. Competency achievements are recognized through digital badges, certificates, or community acknowledgments.
 - b. Recognition is meaningful to external stakeholders (schools, families, higher ed, employers).
 - c. Achievements emphasize skills and impact rather than time or attendance.

6. Stakeholder Engagement & Partnerships
 - a. Families, schools, and community partners are engaged in defining competencies and recognizing outcomes.
 - b. Partnerships with schools ensure that competencies developed complement and extend formal learning.
 - c. Partnerships with community and industry ensure relevance and authenticity.
7. Organizational Culture & Sustainability
 - a. The organization models a competency-based culture internally (staff development, reflective practice, continuous improvement).
 - b. Equity and access are central: all students have opportunities to build and demonstrate competencies.
 - c. The organization has structures in place for sustaining quality and growth of competency-based practices.