

USDLA Excellence in Professional Development Award/Continuing Education Programs

Award description: This award recognizes and celebrates outstanding distance learning programs that open new pathways and empower adult learners and professionals to upskill, reskill, or pursue personal growth through flexible, accessible courses. In a rapidly evolving landscape, this award highlights distance education's vital role in meeting the growing demand for continuous, career-long development.

Continuing Education Programs

Honoring continuing education programs that provide ongoing opportunities for learners seeking to maintain, update, or broaden their knowledge and skills. These courses are tailored for professionals and lifelong learners who wish to stay at the forefront of their fields and adapt to changing industry standards.

Rubric:

Criterion	Strong (10)	Medium (5)	Weak (1)
Curriculum/Content	Content is continuously updated with input from industry and academic experts to address current standards and innovations.	Periodic updates occur, but may lag behind the latest trends or lack deep industry engagement.	Content is outdated and does not reflect current industry standards or practices.
Impact on Professional Growth	Demonstrates clear, measurable impact on career progression or skill enhancement for participants (e.g., testimonials, data on advancement).	Some evidence of impact exists, but it is not systematically collected or reported.	No evidence of professional impact or benefit for participants.
Inclusivity & Accessibility	Program is accessible to a broad audience, with support for diverse backgrounds,	The program has some accessibility features, but it lacks comprehensive inclusion or	Significant barriers exist, with little attention to inclusivity or learner support.

	flexible scheduling, and multiple learning modalities.	adaptability for all learners.	
Recognition & Credentialing	Learners receive recognized credentials or continuing education units (CEUs) that are valued by employers and industry bodies.	Credentials are offered but have limited recognition or value outside the program.	No formal recognition or credential provided upon completion.