



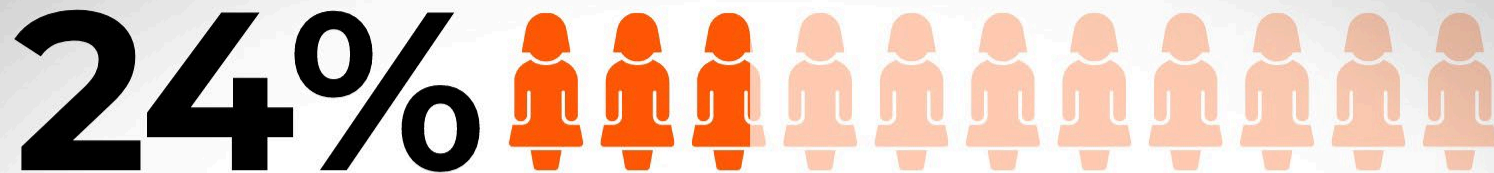
IS CREDENTIALING RIGHT FOR YOU?

ALICE FERRIS, MBA, CFRE, ACFRE

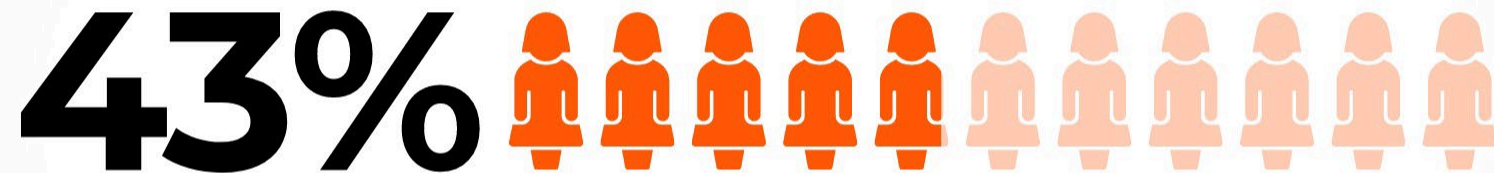
ABOUT ME



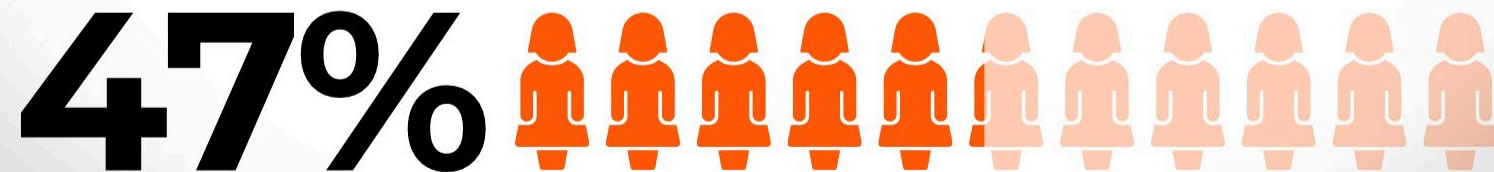
- **More letters after my name than in it**
- **Past member of ACFRE Credentialing Board and CFRE International Board**
- **Encouraged and mentored to credential**
- **Didn't find personal fulfillment until ACFRE process**
- **Adjunct Faculty for Nonprofit Leadership Program at Denver University**



are Certified Fundraising Executives



have a post-graduate diploma or specialization



have a four year degree (any major)

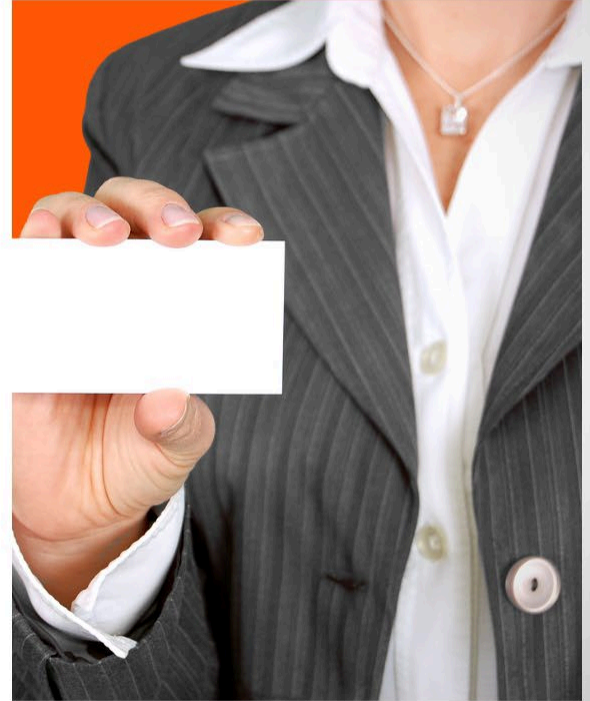
YOU HAVE OPTIONS



Degree



Certificate



Credential

DEGREE



- **Associate, Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate**
- **Delivered by accredited academic institution**
- **Complete required coursework**
- **May not have knowledge at entry point**
- **Designed to certify that you have completed educational content**

CERTIFICATE



- **Specialty programs ranging from software to specific fundraising strategy**
- **May be delivered by an academic institution or a private organization**
- **Complete required coursework**
- **May or may not have prior knowledge**
- **Designed to certify that you have completed specialized content**

CREDENTIAL



- **Specific to industry: fundraising related credentials include CFRE, ACFRE, FAHP, CSPG, CNP, GPC, and more**
- **Delivered by a private organization that may or may not be accredited**
- **Complete required assessment developed by the organization**
- **Must have some level of expertise going into the process**
- **Designed to certify that you have knowledge compared to a benchmark**

PROS AND CONS

DEGREE: PROS



- **Transferable to across sectors**
- **Recognized by most people and organizations**
- **May lead to higher compensation and eligibility for jobs**

DEGREE: CONS



- **Costly and time consuming**
- **Hard to do as a working professional**
- **“Book smart” v. “street smart”**
- **Programs may not be up to date on current practice**

CERTIFICATE: PROS



- **Demonstrates a deep dive into an area where you have developed skills**
- **Industry specific cache**
- **Less costly and less time consuming than a degree program**
- **May also lead to higher compensation and job eligibility specific to your sector**

CERTIFICATE: CONS



- **Not transferable if you leave the field**
- **While less costly than a degree, it's still costly**

CREDENTIAL: PROS



- Shows a commitment to your career and sector
- Implies in the trenches experience
- Fewer people achieve these, so there's a level of exclusivity
- Less costly and less time consuming than a degree program
- **May** lead to higher compensation

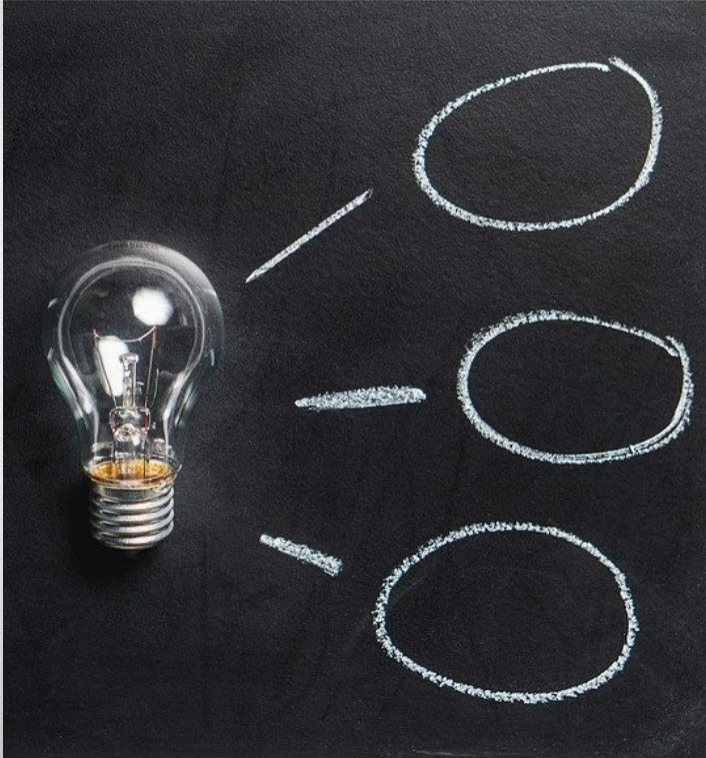
CREDENTIAL: CONS



- **Not widely recognized outside of sector**
- **Buyer beware-anyone can develop and sell a credential**
- **Usually need to recertify which leads to an ongoing expense**
- **Non-transferable to other sectors**

WHAT'S RIGHT FOR ME?

ASK YOURSELF



- **Why do I want to do this?**
- **What are my time and money constraints?**
- **How committed am I to this career?**


**AM I WILLING TO DO
SOMETHING THAT
MIGHT BE HARD?**

WHEN CONSIDERING OPTIONS

- **Degrees, Certificates and Credentials are not interchangeable**
- **For Certificates and Credentials in particular, do your research**

i.e. buyer beware if it's too easy to get

- **What's your why?**
and it might change over time
- **Your mileage may vary**
what's right for you may not be what's right for someone else
- **Money is the wrong why**
It may or may not lead to more money

A wooden desk with a stack of papers on the right side. A yellow sticky note is pinned to the desk with a red pushpin. The sticky note has the words "To Do:" written in black marker. A semi-transparent grey box with white text is overlaid on the sticky note.

To Do:

MAKING IT HAPPEN

UNDERSTAND THE LOGISTICS

- **Download the requirements from the credential's website**
- **Set up an online account if applicable**
- **Begin the application process**
even if you're not sure

KEEP CURRENT



- Attend professional development at least once a month and track it
- **Read!** Check the credential's reading list and subscribe to industry newsletters and blogs

PREPARATION



- **Get a study guide or practice exam if available for your credential**
but make sure it's legit
- **Find a study group if you like**
- **Reach out to someone who's done this already**
- **If there's a written test, practice taking a test**

GIVE YOURSELF A DEADLINE



- If you're motivated by deadlines, pick one and tell someone about it

A deep blue and purple starry night sky with a prominent nebula. The text "DON'T PANIC." is centered in a white box.

DON'T PANIC.



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