



NCWorks
CERTIFIED WORK READY
COMMUNITY

The purpose of the **NCWorks Certified Work Ready Community (CWRC)** initiative is to provide **counties** with a framework to validate that they have a skilled workforce ready to fill current and future jobs. Strategic partners in the CWRC initiative include, the North Carolina Community Colleges System, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the North Carolina Chamber, and numerous economic/workforce development entities throughout the state. Success of the CWRC initiative will be achieved when established goals of individuals earning a **National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)** are met; along with business recognition and recommendation of qualified NCRC applicants in their hiring process.

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NCWorks
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Application Package

***Certified by the
North Carolina Chamber Foundation***

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NCWorks Certified Work Ready Community

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. What is a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)?** The NCRC, is an industry-recognized, portable, evidence-based credential that certifies essential skills for workplace success. Go to www.act.org/certificate. The NCRC measures skills employers believe are critical to job success. Individuals can earn the NCRC by taking three WorkKeys® assessments:
 - Applied Math
 - Locating Information
 - Reading for Information
- 2. Where does an individual obtain an NCRC?** The certificates may be obtained as an enrolled customer at one of the state's Career Centers or receiving services through Workforce Investment Act (WIA) contractors. The North Carolina Community Colleges may offer this service to employers and employees. Secondary schools offer the certificate in North Carolina to students who complete a Career and Technical Education concentration.
- 3. How will being a Work Ready Community help the community?** Current and potential employers who may consider your community will want to know about the quality of your workforce. Certification answers many questions and tells employers you are serious about meeting their needs. Being part of the Certified Work Ready Community initiative will give your community exposure on North Carolina's website as well as ACT's national website.
- 4. Who is eligible?** Any county in North Carolina may apply. Upon review and approval, the county may be granted a Certified Work Ready Community "*in Progress*" status after the application is filed and accepted. No unit smaller than a county may apply, counties in a region may be considered for regional status only after all included counties meet the certification requirements.
- 5. How does a county achieve certification?** A county will become eligible for certification when it reaches its goals. Goals and process are explained in the application packet and individual county goals can be found at <http://www.workreadycommunities.org/NC>. By clicking on the North Carolina map, every county in North Carolina can be accessed and choosing a specific county will display the intended goals. Additional information can be found on the CWRC website.
- 6. Is there a fee to apply?** No, there is no fee to apply.

- 7. How does a community apply?** First a local committee, as outlined in the application process, will need to be formed. A signed commitment letter (*sample included*) from each member of the local team is required, along with narrative plans for achieving the posted county goals. The application packet can be completed online with all other documents attached and submitted; or it can be mailed along with narratives and commitment letters to: NCWorks Certified Work Ready Community c/o NC DPI Career and Technical Education, 6361 Mail Service Center, Raleigh , NC 27699-6361 Attn: Jo Anne Honeycutt. Faxing is also permissible to the attention of Jo Anne Honeycutt at 919-807-3899.
- 8. How long will a community have to meet the criteria to achieve CWRC status?** A community will have up to two years to accomplish the goals and meet the criteria to become certified.
- 9. What is the difference between a Certified Work Ready Community and a Certified Work Ready Community “In Progress” status?** The Certified Work Ready Community “in Progress” status is for communities who have not yet reached the goals set for them, but have plans in place to achieve those goals. The “in Progress” status will be granted after the submission and acceptance of their application. The Certified Work Ready Community refers to a community that has achieved its goals and been granted this status by the North Carolina Chamber Foundation.
- 10. When can a community apply?** It may apply at any time, but the applications will only be reviewed two times a year. **The first deadline will be September 30, 2014.** The next application due date will be March 31, 2015. Please refer to the calendar following the application package.
- 11. Who will have the final determination for awarding certification?** A review committee will evaluate the application and recommend the certification status to the North Carolina Chamber Foundation Board of Directors, who will grant final approval.

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CHECKLIST

Congratulations on the decision to become a NCWorks Certified Work Ready Community. This list includes recommended and required steps for application completion.

✓ **Organize the local team/committee**

Counties are encouraged to build their teams with local stakeholders. Members should have a strong commitment to this effort as they will be essential to the long term outcome. Each team needs a leader who will have the time to ensure success for the county. Each team should include members from local Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Professionals, County Commissioner/local government officials, Education Leadership (K-12), local Workforce Investment Boards, local employers, and local community colleges.

✓ **Assess the county goals, using Framework provided**

The workreadycommunities.org site contains a map of North Carolina and each county has goals specific to its population (small, medium, and large). By clicking on your county local goals will be viewable. These goals have been chosen by CWRC strategic partners and are based on the 2010 Census.

✓ **Develop the county plan to reach threshold criteria**

A plan for achieving the county goals will be part of your application. When the plan is approved, your county will be given the Work Ready Community in Progress status. Supplemental narratives regarding your community that your Team considers significant information may also be submitted.

✓ **Prepare Application**

The applicant will be required to gather letters of commitment from each of its Team members. A sample for this letter may be found in the application package. The name of the primary contact person for the CWRC will also need to be included.

✓ **Mail to: NCWorks CWRC c/o NC DPI Career and Technical Education**

**Jo Anne Honeycutt
Mail Service Center 6361
Raleigh, NC 27699-6361**

NCWorks Certified Work Ready Community

CRITERIA FOR CERTIFICATION

Community Commitment-*required*

Evidence of strong commitment from key stakeholders is a necessity. This allows a community to demonstrate true collaboration and progress toward achieving strategic goals that bring together education, workforce, and economic development.

Certified Work Ready Community- Application must show support including signed letters of commitment from each one of these required stakeholders:

Committee Makeup

1. Chamber of commerce representative
2. Economic development professional
3. Elected Official (county commissioner, city council member, mayor)
4. Education Representative (superintendent, administrator, school board member, career tech education leader)
5. Community college representative
6. Local Workforce Development-Workforce Investment Board

National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)-*required*

This assessment is accepted throughout the nation by employers and is being used in 44 states. It is a measure for employers to ensure job seekers possess a qualified degree of work readiness.

Certified Work Ready Community- Each North Carolina county must achieve the assigned goal numbers of credentials for their local workforce.

These goal numbers have been determined by county size (small, medium and large). The determination was made by the CWRC strategic partners. They are posted on the website for Certified Work Ready Communities, under the map of North Carolina at workreadycommunities.org.

Businesses Support-required

Attaining business support for the Certified Work Ready Communities initiative will be essential to each county's success.

Certified Work Ready Community - Businesses will submit an Employer Commitment Form and agree to recognize, prefer or recommend the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) in their hiring. The Employer Commitment Form can be found at <http://www.workreadycommunities.org/business/form>.

Participating businesses and county derived goals will be posted on the national Work Ready Communities site, as well as on the North Carolina website for the NCRC. Business engagement goals were determined by the CWRC strategic partners based on county size.

Graduation Rate-required

In addition to meeting CWRC goals for the workforce and goals for business engagement, NCWorks Certified Work Ready Communities must also meet goals for high school graduation rates. Your community should have a plan in place to increase your high school graduation rate, working to keep students from dropping out.

To be a certified Work Ready County, a county must have:

- a 4-year graduation rate of at least 94%; **OR**
- a 4-year graduation rate of at least 75% with average annual increases of 1% over the past five years; **OR**
- an average increase of 2% per year for the previous five years if the 4-year graduation rate is less than 75%.

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APPLICATION

1. Name of County _____

2. Commitment of Key Stakeholders(check) Organization Name

Important: The steering committee must be compromised at a minimum of the following individuals representing the following:

Local Chamber of Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Economic Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Elected Official(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Education (K-12)	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Community College	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Workforce Development – Local WIB	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Employer	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Attach commitment letters from committee members; other organizations supporting your effort are helpful—see sample letter

3. Narratives for Criteria supporting NCRC and employer engagement-*required*

A narrative that outlines plans to reach established goals within a certain period of time must be completed and submitted (three pages maximum). The plan should:

a) **Explain your county plan for achieving the NCRC numbers required for certification.**

Be specific in your explanation as it relates to the numbers in these categories:

Transitional – unemployed workers/job seekers

Emerging – graduating students

Current Workforce – workers currently employed in the private or public sector

Veterans

b) Include strategies to build employer support and recognition of the NCRC in your county.

c) Describe the county's plan to engage employers in this initiative and for reaching the established goals.

4. Narrative for Criteria supporting increase in high school graduation rates-*required*

**5. Your Steering Committee Leader
Contact Information (Primary contact for your county application)**

(Name)

(Phone)

(email)

(Address)

Your checklist before mailing electronically, faxing, or posting:

FAX: (919)-807-3899

Signed Commitment Letters from Steering committee members	
Narrative plan for your community's effort to meet NCRC goals	
Narrative plan for your community's initiative to meet employer engagement goals	
<i>Are you including supplemental information? If so, describe.</i>	

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LETTERS OF COMMITMENT - *SAMPLE*

Dear NCWorks Certified Work Ready Communities Review Committee:

Please consider this letter documentation of our commitment to the NCWorks Certified Work Ready Communities initiative for _____ County.

_____ (organization name) commits to participation in the program, and will encourage and promote the CWRC in our local communities.

In addition to the above, we will also send our representative to all necessary meetings in preparation for this effort; recommend the National Career Readiness Certificate to local employers and job seekers; and acknowledge the certificate in our hiring practices.

Organization Name _____

Company Website _____

Key Contact _____

Contact Title/Role _____

Contact Phone Number _____

Contact E-mail _____

Address _____

City _____ County _____

Zip _____

Signature and Date _____