

# Employment Outcomes for ACT<sup>®</sup> NCRC<sup>®</sup> Earners

**RESULTS:**

Wage Gains by NCRC Level (Compared to U.S. Median Wages)<sup>1</sup>



increase with  
Gold/Platinum NCRC



increase with  
Silver NCRC



increase with  
Bronze NCRC

**WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS USED:**



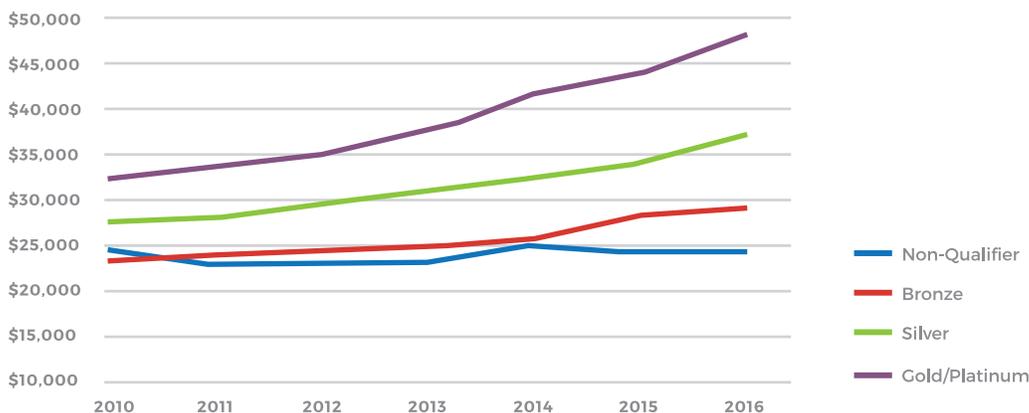
## Addressing a Need for ACT NCRC National Outcome Data

- Policymakers, education and workforce stakeholders, and individuals want to have accurate, national-level information on NCRC earners' economic outcomes, such as earnings and employment.
- Equifax, one of the nation's largest consumer credit reporting agencies, makes such information available through their Work Number program.<sup>2</sup>
- The study sought to estimate economic outcomes for a representative sample of 50,000 WorkKeys NCRC-tested individuals using employer-sourced Equifax data.
- With these data, ACT and Equifax researchers can estimate the relationship between NCRC levels and earnings—a common query posed by policymakers and employers.

### TAKEAWAY

There is a positive relationship between higher NCRC and WorkKeys skill levels, and short- and long-term wages.

## Adult NCRC Examinee Wages by NCRC Level<sup>3</sup>



The ACT NCRC is a credential issued in four levels based on examinee WorkKeys level scores on Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, and Locating Information. A minimum level score of 3 is Bronze, 4 is Silver, 5 is Gold, and 6 is a Platinum NCRC. As of June 2017, over 4 million individuals have earned an NCRC.

## Outcomes for NCRC Earners

- There is a trend between the top levels of performance on the ACT NCRC and income throughout an individual's career.<sup>4</sup>
- Adults who earned a Silver or Gold/Platinum NCRC increased their income within two years.

## Overview of NCRC 2010 Examinee Data

- The representative sample of examinees was primarily located in Southern (43%) and Midwest (49%) states.
- Examinees had the following levels of education:
  - 54% had less than a high school diploma/GED
  - 33% had a high school diploma/GED
  - 14% had some postsecondary education or higher

## Other Findings

- Adult NCRC recipients with just a HS diploma/GED can expect short- and long-term increased earnings above those with a similar level of education and geography who do not have the NCRC credential.
- On average, individuals who score higher on the WorkKeys assessments and earn higher levels on the NCRC can expect short- and long-term increases in wages.
- Adults scoring level 5 or higher on Applied Mathematics increased their income within a year of earning an NCRC.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Southern U.S. Median income for individuals with less than a high school diploma/GED. From the U.S. American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2011-2015. NCRC examinee wages were weighted by match rate with Equifax data and averaged from 2011-2016.

<sup>2</sup> The Work Number (<https://www.theworknumber.com/>) collects week-by-week salary information which is as up to date as the last pay period and can go back many years. It also collects length of employment, job titles, and industry category. The Work Number is used by over 50,000 organizations, including government agencies (to verify employment and wages to determine eligibility for government assistance) and employers (to verify work history for a job candidate).

<sup>3</sup> Equifax income calculations include the actual income reported by employers for every year of employment (divided by days of employment if the employee did not work the full year). Income rates are annualized and adjusted to 2016 dollars. Individuals were not included who worked less than 28 hours a week or who were employed less than 30 days a year.

<sup>4</sup> Because of other potential factors that we cannot control for, the relationship between WorkKeys/NCRC levels and wages may not be causal—that is, we can't say that NCRC or WorkKeys is the reason why an individual's earnings increased over time.

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