

A group of three diverse people (a woman in the foreground, a man in the middle, and a woman in the background) are smiling and looking towards the camera. They are dressed in professional attire. The background is slightly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting.

ACT[®] Work Ready Communities

A framework for community-based workforce development to drive economic growth

ACT[®] Work Ready
Communities

workreadycommunities.org



The competitive advantage

When businesses must focus on cutting costs and good jobs are harder to find, communities that use industry-recognized skills credentials to improve their workforce have the advantage.

Across the United States, **ACT® Work Ready Communities** are improving the skills and work readiness of the workforce while giving area businesses an efficient, reliable way to identify skilled job candidates. These communities provide counties and states with actionable data and specific workforce goals to drive economic growth.

Key to the ACT Work Ready Communities initiative is the **ACT® WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate®** (ACT® WorkKeys® NCRC®), which is designed to measure and close skills gaps among workers and job seekers. The ACT WorkKeys NCRC is a portable, evidence-based credential that certifies essential skills needed for workplace success—reading for information, applied mathematics, and locating information. ACT Work Ready Communities also help individuals and businesses understand the value of the ACT WorkKeys NCRC and community certification.

ACT is leading this national effort and offers a yearlong executive training program—the ACT Work Ready Communities Boot Camp—that guides teams through the successful startup and deployment of certified ACT Work Ready Communities initiatives.

Why get involved?

Many groups benefit when their states, counties, or regions join the ACT Work Ready Communities initiative.

- **Businesses and industries** can learn exactly what foundational skills are needed for a productive workforce and can easily communicate their needs to job seekers
- **Individuals** can understand what skills employers require and how to prepare for career success
- **Policymakers** can consistently measure skills gaps in a timely manner at the national, state, and local levels
- **Educators** can close skills gaps via tools integrated into career pathways with stackable, industry-recognized credentials
- **Economic developers** can use an on-demand reporting tool to market the quality of their workforce

How does a community become certified?

Participating counties are certified as “work ready” when they meet established goals based on their population, the number of individuals earning the ACT WorkKeys NCRC, and the level of employer participation.

ACT works with states and counties to set these goals based on current labor force data at the county level and across the community’s current, transitioning, and emerging workforce.

Participants are grouped into the following categories:

Current workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Currently employed by a public, private, or nonprofit organization• Currently employed by the local, state, or federal government
Transitioning workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Currently unemployed• GED or adult education participant• Current or recent active-duty military
Emerging workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High school junior, senior, or recent graduate• College student or recent graduate

How to get involved

Participation is open to both state-level teams and local or regional teams.

Visit workreadycommunities.org for more information, or email wrc@act.org.

Participants receive:

- Acceptance to the ACT Work Ready Communities Boot Camp, which provides an intensive, year long series of workshops for leadership teams on how to build ACT Work Ready Communities
- Outreach tools to help promote the ACT WorkKeys NCRC and the ACT Work Ready Communities effort among key audiences— individuals, businesses, and economic developers
- Guidance with setting individual county goals for the numbers of ACT WorkKeys NCRCs earned and businesses engaged
- Monthly data reports to track progress against goals

Participants are expected to:

- Use ACT work readiness solutions, including job analysis, assessments, training and curriculum, and certification
- Have a committed leadership team
- Have a consistent service delivery framework to support individuals
- Register ACT WorkKeys NCRCs in the ACT database

Detailed criteria are available at workreadycommunities.org/resources/Criteria_for_Certification.pdf

“ We envision an industry-driven, community-based model that assesses job seekers’ skills and provides a support system for closing those skills gaps so Americans can compete globally.”

—The Honorable Sonny Perdue, former chairman, ACT National Workforce Solutions Advisory Board

ACT Work Ready Communities drive innovation at all levels

PARTNERS	CAPABILITIES
ACT - the non profit organization with a track record of producing assessments and credentials	Delivers the process for involving states and counties; the assessment and certification tools; and rich, county specific workforce skill data updated each month
State ACT Work Ready Communities team	A public-private team of chambers of commerce, business leaders, and education leaders whose purpose is to build a service delivery infrastructure and engage business leaders statewide while implementing processes at the county level
Local ACT Work Ready Communities team	A county-level or regional team that mirrors the state team in composition. This team uses the ACT approach to solve local workforce issues through attaining and maintaining a certified ACT Work Ready Communities status

About ACT

Founded in 1959, ACT is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Iowa City, Iowa, and dedicated to helping people achieve education and workplace success. ACT provides a broad array of assessment, research, information, and program management solutions in the areas of education and workforce development.

Contact us: wrc@act.org

Improve your region's workforce by joining the ACT Work Ready Communities initiative.

Go to workreadycommunities.org for more information.

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