

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS

## HOW WORK READY COMMUNITIES ARE WINNING THE GROWTH GAME

**Work Ready Communities** (WRC) from ACT is a framework for community-based workforce development to **drive economic growth**. Regions improve their workforce and **compete on quality** for location consultants, investors, and other decision-makers using data powered by the WorkKeys<sup>®</sup> National Career Readiness Certificate. More than **23,000 employers** support NCRC nationwide. *Site Selection* magazine uses NCRC data yearly to **rank state competitiveness**.

- ▶ Show prospects how to reduce risk and boost profit with skills-based hiring
- ▶ Pinpoint and align prospects' workforce needs with profiled tasks
- ▶ Integrate co-branded resources into powerful marketing and outreach
- ▶ Build track record in serving employer needs for retention and expansion

**Level the  
playing field  
with a high  
performing  
workforce**

*As a national site selector, one of the few factors that are critical to almost every company and project is workforce. It is imperative for communities to focus on knowing and improving their existing workforce as well as retaining and attracting high quality talent. ACT Work Ready Communities are setting themselves apart by intentionally developing their local workforce in support of their existing companies while positioning themselves to attract new companies.*

—Robby Burgan  
Manager, Location Strategies  
Evergreen Advisors

*Having been in site selection for many years, it has always been difficult to ensure my clients that there is available, stable and reliable workforce in a community. However, in the last few years when I see that a county is ACT Work Ready I know that they are following the steps in planning for the current and future workforce. Therefore, our tendency at FCG is to look strongly at ACT Work Ready Communities for new site locations. I would encourage all communities to seek that status.*

—Mr. Deane C. Foote, CEcD  
President & CEO  
Foote Consulting Group

**89%**  
**Skilled Labor  
Availability  
Important or  
Very  
Important**

Work Ready Communities get certified by meeting workforce and employer support goals established by ACT's equitable criteria. Each goal category can be tracked extensively to provide additional competitive intel.

- ▶ **Emerging Workforce:** High school junior, senior, or recent grad; college student or recent grad
- ▶ **Current Workforce:** Currently employed by public, private, or non-profit organization; currently employed in government
- ▶ **Transitioning Workforce:** Currently unemployed; GED or Adult Ed participant; current or recent active-duty military
- ▶ **Supporting Employers:** Endorsements of employers that recognize or recommend NCRC for hiring or promotion

*Outstanding program that helps business recruit and retain qualified workers. Congrats on the milestone. As a corollary would recommend that all counties become work ready certified.*

—Mr. Dennis Donovan  
Location Strategy and  
Site Selection Advisor

*ACT Work Ready is truly the best workforce development marketing tool I have seen.*

—Chad Chancellor  
Co-Founder/CEO  
The Next Move Group

Source: ACT WRC  
Leaders Survey, 2017

**82%**  
Certified counties  
use WRC  
to promote  
county to new  
businesses

**89%**  
Certified counties  
use WRC to  
support  
existing  
industry

## TIPS

Site Selection consultants offer the following tips for Work Ready Communities to maximize their certification excellence

- ▶ Availability and cost of skilled labor remains a top factor and barrier
- ▶ Explain the unique features and benefits of your Work Ready Community to investors (beyond simply claiming to have certification)
- ▶ Demonstrate partnerships of your Work Ready Community and how partnerships can help new and expanding firms
- ▶ Align your NCRC data to show how it meets specific industry demand
- ▶ Set up meetings so prospects may interview existing employers during site visit

## OPPORTUNITIES

Economic Development leaders across the nation open many new doors of impact linked to their Work Ready Communities efforts

- ▶ Boost job candidate pipeline with solutions for targeted populations such as ex-offenders, immigrants, welfare recipients, etc.
- ▶ Promote WRC certification in site/building listings, community profiles, social media, etc.
- ▶ Enhance partnerships in specific sectors to link targeted training and stackable credentials
- ▶ Disaster recovery and community revitalization

## CASE STUDIES

Source: [act.org/workforcesuccess](http://act.org/workforcesuccess)

### SUBARU OF INDIANA AUTOMOTIVE

Filled 1,100 new jobs (out of 22,300 applications) in record time using job profiling and assessments

▼ **25%** reduction in turnover

### PHIFER INC. (AL)

Developed talent pipeline to fill entry-through-senior-level jobs using profiling and assessments

▼ **\$2 Million** reduction in training costs

- ▶ 25% reduction in training time
- ▶ Turnover reduction 14% to 7%
- ▶ Orientation time and testing dropped by 35%

### WAGE EARNINGS OF NCRC HOLDERS

Positive trend of NCRC levels and increased earnings, often within first two years

▲ **Up to 102%** increase in earnings

### BERNER FOODS (IL)

Reduced employee turnover by putting the right people in the right job, the first time

▼ **95%** reduction in work comp expenses

- ▶ 80% reduction in nonconforming product
- ▶ 92% reduction in terminations
- ▶ Best safety run in 70 years

**ACT**® Work Ready  
Communities

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