



# ACT Work Ready Communities

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

**ACT**<sup>®</sup> Work Ready Communities

[workreadycommunities.org](http://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 National Career Readiness Certificate®** (ACT NCRC®), which is designed to measure and close skills gaps among workers and job seekers. The ACT 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 NCRC and community certification.

ACT is leading this national effort and offers a yearlong executive training program—the **ACT Work Ready Communities Academy**—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 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:

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

## How to get involved

Participation is open to both state-level teams and local or regional teams. Visit [workreadycommunities.org](http://workreadycommunities.org) for more information, or contact ACT Community and Economic Development for an application.

### Participants receive:

- Acceptance to the ACT Work Ready Communities Academy, which provides an intensive, yearlong series of workshops for leadership teams on how to build ACT Work Ready Communities
- Outreach tools to help promote the ACT 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 NCRCs earned and businesses engaged
- Monthly data reports to track progress against goals

### Participants are expected to:

- Use ACT’s 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 NCRCs in ACT’s database

Detailed criteria are available at [workreadycommunities.org/resources/Criteria\\_for\\_Certification.pdf](http://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’s National Workforce Solutions Advisory Board

## ACT Work Ready Communities drive innovation at all levels

	CAPABILITIES	PARTNERS
<b>Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide leadership at the local level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Businesses</li> <li>Chambers of commerce and economic development groups</li> <li>Workforce development groups</li> <li>Boards of education</li> <li>County commissioners and mayors</li> <li>Technical/community colleges</li> </ul>
<b>States</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide leadership at the state level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governors</li> <li>State chambers of commerce</li> <li>State technical/community college systems</li> <li>State commerce or economic development agencies</li> <li>State workforce agencies</li> <li>K-12 education systems</li> </ul>
<b>ACT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a framework for implementation</li> <li>Invests in infrastructure</li> <li>Provides monthly workforce data</li> <li>Hosts training academy for participating states</li> <li>Provides toolkits and support</li> </ul>	
<b>Advisory Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides oversight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Global C-level business leaders</li> <li>US Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>National workforce leaders</li> <li>Site selection consultants</li> <li>Economic developers</li> </ul>

### 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:

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For more information, visit [act.org](http://act.org).

**Improve your region's workforce by joining the ACT Work Ready Communities initiative. Go to [workreadycommunities.org](http://workreadycommunities.org) for more information.**



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