



The purpose of the Missouri Certified Work Ready Communities initiative is to provide **counties** with a framework to validate that they have a skilled workforce ready to fill current and future jobs. Missouri is partnering with ACT in this endeavor and this will be accomplished by meeting established goals of individuals earning a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and the businesses participating by recognizing, preferring or recommending the NCRC in their hiring practice.

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Missouri

Work Ready

Communities

Application Package

Sponsored by:
Missouri Workforce Investment Board



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Missouri Work Ready Communities

Dear Community Leaders:

Thank you for your interest in the Certified Missouri Work Ready Communities initiative. By taking part in this effort, you will have the opportunity to transform your community's economy and gain a competitive advantage in expanding existing businesses and attracting new businesses and jobs.

In order to qualify, your county will need to reach the targeted goals. This will include a certain number of individuals in your workforce obtaining a National Career Readiness Certificate, and a set number of employers recognizing, preferring or recommending the NCRC in their hiring. County goals for each of Missouri's 114 counties and St. Louis City may be viewed at workreadycommunities.org.

The enclosed packet will guide you through the application process. Once your application is submitted, it will be reviewed and a recommendation will be made to the Missouri Workforce Investment Board (MoWIB), which will make the final determination for certification.

With this being the being first round of applications, we anticipate most communities will not have achieved their county goals; therefore, most successful applicants will be granted a *"Work Ready Community in Progress"* status. If your community has already achieved its goals, a *Work Ready Community* status will be awarded.

APPLICATION PACKET INCLUDES

1. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – about the Work Ready Communities initiative
2. Checklist for Application-steps to take for submission
3. Criteria for certification
4. Application
5. Letters of Commitment
6. MoWib calendar-coming soon

Certification goals may seem challenging at first glance, but with a strong leadership team, and a well-developed plan, they are most certainly attainable! Once granted "in progress" status, counties will have up to two years to achieve certification.

We sincerely hope all of our counties will give consideration to CWRC application. Please feel free to contact our statewide CWRC coordinator, Molly Tallarico (573-522-2744), or submit questions via email mary.tallarico@ded.mo.gov. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Keith Gary, Chairman
Missouri Workforce Investment Board

Missouri Work Ready Communities

FAQs

- 1. Will being a Work Ready Community help us? How? Absolutely!** Current and potential employers who may consider your community as a location 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 ACT's national website, as well as on Missouri's website.
- 2. Who is eligible?** Any county in Missouri 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.
- 3. 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 on ACT's site workreadycommunities.org. By clicking on the Missouri map, every county in Missouri can be accessed and clicking on a specific county will display the intended goals.
- 4. Is there a fee to apply?** No, there is no cost to apply.
- 5. How do we apply?** First you will form a local committee, as outlined on the application process. You will need a signed commitment letter (*sample included*) from each member of the local team. You must submit your narrative plans for achieving the posted county goals. The application can be filled out online and submitted or you will need to mail your packet with narratives and commitment letters to: CWRC, PO Box 1087, Jefferson City, MO 65102.
- 6. What is a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)?** The NCRC, developed by ACT, 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 WorkKey® assessments:

1. Applied Math
2. Locating Information
3. Reading for Information

7. **Where does an individual obtain an NCRC?** The certificates can be obtained as an enrolled customer at one of the state's 41 Career Centers. The Missouri Community Colleges may offer this service to employers and incumbent workers. Some secondary schools and a number of vocational programs offer the certificate in Missouri.
8. **How long will we have to meet our criteria to achieve CWRC status?** You will have up to two years to accomplish your goals and meet the criteria to become certified.
9. **What is the difference between a Certified Work Ready Community and a Work Ready Community "In Progress" status?** The MoWIB, a Governor appointed board, with responsibility for providing leadership for workforce development in Missouri, may grant two categories of certification. The Work Ready "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 by the MoWIB 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 MoWIB.
10. **When can we apply?** You may apply at any time, but the applications will only be reviewed three times a year. **The first deadline will be November 30, 2012.** Please refer to the MoWIB *calendar* following the application package for specific dates.
11. **Who will have the final determination for awarding certification?** A review committee will evaluate the application and recommend the certification status to the entire Missouri Workforce Investment Board (MoWIB), who shall then have the final vote.

Missouri Work Ready Communities

CHECKLIST

Congratulations on your decision to apply for the Missouri Work Ready Communities initiative. This list includes recommended and required steps in completing your application.

✓ **Organize your 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. We suggest each team have a leader who will have the time to ensure success for your 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 your county goals, using ACT National Framework**

By going to the workreadycommunities.org site you will find a map of Missouri. Each county has goals specific to its population, (small, medium, and large) and by clicking on your county you will find your local goals. These goals have been chosen by Missouri's Department of Economic Development and ACT, and are based on the 2010 Census.

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

You will be required to submit a plan for achieving your goals to the CWRC office when you notify them of your intent to participate. If data is approved, your county will be given the Work Ready Community in Progress status. You MAY submit a supplemental narrative regarding your community that your Team considers significant information.

✓ **Prepare Application**

You will be required to gather letters of commitment from each of your 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 need to be included.

✓ **Mail to:**

Molly Tallarico, CWRC
PO Box 1087
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Missouri Work Ready Communities

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.

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

Committee Makeup

1. Chambers of Commerce
2. Economic Development Professionals
3. Elected Official-suggestions: County Commissioner, County Council member, Mayors
4. Education Representatives such as - Superintendents, Administrators School Board, K-12, Career Tech Education leaders.
5. Community Colleges
6. Local Workforce Development-Workforce Investment Board (LWIB)
7. Employers/Businesses

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.

Work Ready Community- Each Missouri County must achieve their 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 Missouri Department of Economic Development and ACT. They are posted on the ACT website for Work Ready Communities, under the map of Missouri at workreadycommunities.org.

Businesses Supporting-required

The number of businesses supporting the Certified Work Ready Communities Initiative will be another goal for each county.

Work Ready Community - Businesses will sign a Letter of Partnership, and agree to recognize, prefer or recommend the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) in their hiring. To print the Business Partnership Letter <http://www.jobs.mo.gov/docs/default-document-library/employerlet1011.pdf>

Businesses participating and business goals will be posted on the National ACT Work Ready Communities site, as well as on the Missouri website for the NCRC. Business goals were determined by the Department of Economic Development and ACT based on county size.

Supplemental Criteria - optional

In addition to specific required data, the review panel will consider supplemental criteria which may enhance your acceptance as a Certified Work Ready Community. Your community may be slightly short on data, but have plans in place to enhance your workforce in the future.

EXAMPLES: *must be related to program*

1. Your community may have a plan in place to increase your high school graduation rate, working to keep students from dropping out, this could be included with application
2. Your community may have a significant number of occupational credentials (industry recognized credentials) among your residents, and you may wish to document this for review. This measure lacks a standard tracking system, but community colleges, local employers may be able to assist here. Explain your methodology.
3. Your community may have an active P-20 Council already engaged in some of these efforts; include plans already in place, or expansion for future growth, to develop a stronger workforce.

Missouri Work Ready Communities

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

Economic Development

Elected Official(s)

Education

Community College

Workforce Development –
Local WIB

Employer/Business

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*

Narratives that outline plans to reach established goals within a certain period of time must be completed. Present/submit a plan from your community team, three pages maximum to:

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

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

4. Are you including narrative(s) for supplemental criteria?

Attach narratives for supplemental criteria.

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

(Name)

(Phone)

(email)

(Address)

Your checklist before mailing electronically, or posting:

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?</i>	

Missouri Work Ready Communities

LETTERS OF COMMITMENT - *SAMPLE*

Dear Work Ready Review Committee:

Please consider this letter documentation of our commitment to Missouri's Work Ready Community initiative for _____ County. _____ (organization name) commits to participate 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, we will 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 _____