



## North Carolina Work Ready Communities

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The purpose of the **NCWorks Certified Work Ready Community (CWRC)** initiative is to provide **counties** with a framework to validate that they have a skilled workforce ready to fill current and future jobs. Strategic partners in the CWRC initiative include the NC Chamber, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the North Carolina Community Colleges System, the North Carolina Department of Commerce, and numerous economic or workforce development entities throughout the state. Success of the CWRC initiative will be achieved when established goals of individuals earning a **National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)** are met; along with business recognition and recommendation of qualified NCRC applicants in their hiring process.



## **Work Ready Communities Application Package**

***Certified by the  
NC Chamber Foundation and NC DPI***

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# NCWorks Certified Work Ready Community

## Frequently Asked Questions

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- 1. What is a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)?** The NCRC, is an industry-recognized, portable, evidence-based credential that certifies essential skills for workplace success. The [ACT NCRC](#) measures skills employers believe are critical to job success. Individuals can earn the NCRC by taking three WorkKeys® assessments:
  - Applied Math
  - Workplace Documents
  - Graphic Literacy
- 2. Where does an individual obtain an NCRC?** The certificates may be obtained as an enrolled customer at one of the state's Career Centers or receiving services through Workforce Investment Act (WIA) contractors. The North Carolina Community Colleges may offer this service to employers and employees. Secondary schools offer the certificate in North Carolina to students who complete a Career and Technical Education concentration.
- 3. How will being a Work Ready Community help the community?** Current and potential employers who may consider your community 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 North Carolina's website as well as ACT's national website.
- 4. Who is eligible?** Any county in North Carolina 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 requirements.
- 5. 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 at <http://www.workreadycommunities.org/NC>. By clicking on the North Carolina map, every county in North Carolina can be accessed and choosing a specific county will display the intended goals. Additional information can be found on ACT's WRC website.

- 6. Is there a fee to apply?** No, there is no fee to apply.
- 7. How does a community apply?** First, a county must form a local steering committee or team, as outlined in the application process. A signed commitment letter (*sample included on page 11*) from each member of the steering team is required for application. Applications must also include narrative plans that describe how the county plans to achieve their posted county goals (found online at <https://www.workreadycommunities.org/NC>)

The application packet can be completed online with all other documents attached and submitted or it can be mailed along with narratives and commitment letters to: NCWorks CWRC c/o NC DPI Career and Technical Education, Attn: Cheryl Cox, Work Based Learning Consultant. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 6361 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-6361  
[cheryl.cox@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:cheryl.cox@dpi.nc.gov) 984-236-2762

- 8. How long will a community have to meet the criteria to achieve CWRC status?** A community will have up to two years to accomplish the goals and meet the criteria to become certified.
- 9. What is the difference between a Certified Work Ready Community and a Certified Work Ready Community “In Progress” status?** The Certified Work Ready Community “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 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 NC Chamber Foundation.
- 10. When can a community apply?** Counties may apply at any time, applications will be reviewed on an on-going basis
- 11. Who will have the final determination for awarding certification?** A review committee will evaluate the application and recommend the certification status to ACT, as supported by the NC Chamber Foundation

# NCWorks Certified Work Ready Community

## CHECKLIST

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Review these recommended & required steps to complete your application.

### ✓ **Organize your local steering team/committee**

Counties should build their steering teams with local stakeholders. Members should have a strong commitment to this effort as they will be essential to the long-term outcome. Each steering team needs a leader who will have the time to ensure success for the county. Each team must 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**

Each county in North Carolina has specific goals to meet based on its population (small, medium, or large). You can view these goals online at [www.workreadycommunities.org/NC](http://www.workreadycommunities.org/NC). These goals were chosen by CWRC strategic partners and are based on the 2010 Census.

### ✓ **Develop the county plan to reach threshold criteria**

A narrative plan for achieving the county goals will be part of your application. When the plan is approved, your county will be given the Work Ready Community “In Progress” status. Supplemental narratives regarding your community that your team considers significant information may also be submitted.

### ✓ **Prepare application**

Detailed requirements for your application are listed on the following pages. Pieces of your application will include letters of commitment from each of your steering team members, demonstrated business support, and narratives about your process. Please also include the name of the primary contact person for your CWRC initiative.

### ✓ **Mail or email completed application to:**

**NCWorks CWRC c/o NC DPI Career and Technical Education**

***Mrs. Cheryl Causey Cox***

***Work-Based Learning Consultant & WorkReady Communities Chairperson***

**North Carolina Department of Public Instruction**

**6361 Mail Service Center**

**Raleigh, NC 27699-6361**

For questions: Please contact Cheryl Causey Cox – CTE - Work Based Learning  
Consultant (p) 984.236.2762 or [cheryl.cox@nc.dpi.nc](mailto:cheryl.cox@nc.dpi.nc)

# NCWorks Certified Work Ready Community

## CRITERIA FOR CERTIFICATION

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### **Letters of 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.

**Your application must demonstrate support from key stakeholders by including signed letters of commitment from each one of these required stakeholders (who should also form your local planning team or committee):**

1. Chamber of Commerce representative
2. Economic development professional
3. Elected official (county commissioner, city council member, mayor)
4. Education representative (superintendent, administrator, school board member, career tech education leader)
5. Community college representative
6. Local Workforce Development-Workforce Investment Board (LWIB)
7. Local employer

### **National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)** - *required*

This assessment is accepted by employers throughout the nation. It is a measure for employers to ensure job seekers possess a qualified degree of work readiness.

**Each North Carolina county has a goal for numbers of credentials in their local workforce.**

These goal numbers have been determined by county size (small, medium and large). CWRC strategic partners set the goals based on 2010 census population data. You can view your goals on the Certified Work Ready Communities website at [www.workreadycommunities.org/NC](http://www.workreadycommunities.org/NC)

## **Businesses Support - *required***

Attaining business support for the Certified Work Ready Communities initiative will be essential to each county's success.

**A certain number of businesses in your county must submit an Employer Commitment Form and agree to recognize or recommend the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) in their hiring. The Employer Commitment Form can be found at <http://www.workreadycommunities.org/business/form>.**

Goals for number of participating businesses in your county can be found at [www.workreadycommunities.org/NC](http://www.workreadycommunities.org/NC). Business engagement goals were determined by the CWRC strategic partners based on county size.

## **Graduation Rate - *required***

In addition to meeting CWRC goals for the workforce and goals for business engagement, NCWorks Certified Work Ready Communities must also meet goals for high school graduation rates. Your community should have a plan in place to increase your high school graduation rate, working to keep students from dropping out.

To be a certified Work Ready County, a county must have:

- a 4-year graduation rate of at least 94%; **OR**
- a 4-year graduation rate of at least 75% with average annual increases of 1% over the past five years; **OR**
- an average increase of 2% per year for the previous five years if the 4-year graduation rate is less than 75%.



# NCWorks Certified Work Ready Community

## APPLICATION

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### 1. Name of County

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### 2. Commitment of Key Stakeholders

*The steering committee must be compromised at a minimum of the following individuals representing the following sectors:*

	✓	Organization Name
Local Chamber of Commerce		
Economic Development	_____	_____
Elected Official(s)	_____	_____
Education (K-12)	_____	_____
Community College	_____	_____
Workforce Development – Local WIB	_____	_____
Employer	_____	_____
	_____	_____

**NOTE:** Your application must include commitment letters from committee members; other organizations supporting your effort are helpful – **see attached sample letter**

### 3. Steering Committee Leader/County Leader Contact Information:

Name	_____	Phone	_____
Email	_____		
Mailing Address	_____		
City	_____	Zip	_____
	_____		_____

#### 4. Narratives for Criteria supporting NCRC and employer engagement

A narrative that outlines plans to reach established goals within a certain period of time must be completed and submitted. Please insert your narrative into the fields on pages 10-12.

**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** – current students and recent graduates
- **Current Workforce** – workers currently employed in the private or public sector
- **Veterans** (counted in Transitioning goal)

**b) Include strategies to build employer support and recognition of the NCRC in your county.**

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

**5. Narrative for Criteria supporting increase in high school graduation rates**

Review this final checklist before submitting application

<b>Required Material</b>	<b>✓</b>
<b>Signed Commitment Letters from Steering Committee members</b>	
<b>Narrative plan for your community's effort to meet NCRC goals</b>	
<b>Narrative plan for your community's initiative to meet employer engagement goals</b>	
<b><i>Are you including supplemental information? If so, describe and send as an attachment:</i></b>	

# NCWorks Certified Work Ready Community

## LETTERS OF COMMITMENT - *SAMPLE*

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Dear NCWorks Certified Work Ready Communities Review Committee:

Please consider this letter documentation of our commitment to the NCWorks Certified Work Ready Communities initiative for \_\_\_\_\_ County.

\_\_\_\_\_ (organization name) commits to participation 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; 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 \_\_\_\_\_

# **LETTERS OF COMMITMENT - FILLABLE**

**Dear NCWorks Certified Work Ready Communities Review Committee:**

**Please consider this letter documentation of our commitment to the NCWorks Certified Work Ready Communities initiative for \_\_\_\_\_ County.**

**\_\_\_\_\_ (organization name) commits to participation 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; recommend the National Career Readiness Certificate to local employers and job seekers; and acknowledge the certificate in our hiring practices.**

<b>Organization</b>	_____
<b>Website</b>	_____
<b>Key Contact</b>	_____
<b>Title/Role</b>	_____
<b>Phone</b>	_____
<b>Email</b>	_____
<b>Mailing address</b>	_____
<b>County</b>	_____
<b>City and Zip</b>	_____
<b>Date Signed</b>	_____
<b>Signature</b>	_____
	_____