

# ACT® Work Ready Communities: Maintaining criteria



**After a county meets the ACT Work Ready Communities common criteria and becomes a certified ACT Work Ready Community, it can build on that status and strengthen its position as a desirable location for new and expanding businesses.**

Every two years, a county has the opportunity to document its continued workforce development efforts through ACT Work Ready Communities maintaining criteria. When a county has met its maintaining criteria goals, it earns a “maintaining” status ribbon to add to its initial certification badge.

“Maintaining” status goals are similar to the initial certification goals. To achieve “maintaining” status, counties must continue issuing the ACT® WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate® (ACT® WorkKeys® NCRC®) to the current, emerging, and transitioning workforce. The total number of ACT WorkKeys NCRCs earned within the county will be calculated based on the criteria in the tables that follow. In addition to their residents earning ACT WorkKeys NCRCs, counties are also required to select one of three new criteria: improving certificate levels, completing job profiles, or providing college credit for the ACT WorkKeys NCRC.

In addition to listing newly engaged employers, counties will also ask employers who supported the ACT WorkKeys NCRC during the certification phase to reaffirm their support during the maintaining phase. By reconfirming their support, employers can gain greater understanding and usability of ACT® WorkKeys® and the ACT WorkKeys NCRC.

## WORKFORCE STATUS CATEGORIES

<b>Current workforce</b>	Currently employed: private or nonprofit Currently employed: local, state, or federal government
<b>Transitioning workforce</b>	Currently unemployed Adult education participant Current or recent active duty military
<b>Emerging workforce</b>	High school junior, senior, or recent graduate College student or recent graduate



**ACT® Work Ready Communities**

[workreadycommunities.org](http://workreadycommunities.org)

HOW WE “SIZE UP” COMMUNITIES*	
Small counties	Up to 29,999
Medium counties	30,000–99,999
Large counties A	100,000–399,999
Large counties B	400,000–649,999
Very large counties	650,000–999,999
Mega counties	More than 1,000,000

\* Based on US Census Bureau population data

HOW WE CATEGORIZE EMPLOYERS
<b>Small employers (1–4 employees)</b> <i>May aggregate to support their county</i>
<b>Medium employers (5–99 employees)</b> <i>Support their local county</i>
<b>Large employers (100-plus employees)</b> <i>May support all counties within 25 miles</i>

HOW WE CALCULATE ACT NCRC COUNTY WORKFORCE AND BUSINESS GOALS**					
County size	Current workforce	Transitioning workforce	Emerging workforce	ACT WorkKeys NCRC goal gap	New or replighted employers supporting ACT WorkKeys NCRC
Small counties	0.25%	7.5%	25%	1,400	same as certified goal
Medium counties	0.15%	6%	25%	3,000	same as certified goal
Large counties A	0.05%	5%	15%	4,600	same as certified goal
Large counties B	0.0375%	3.75%	10%	6,400	same as certified goal
Very large counties	0.025%	2.5%	5%	7,400	same as certified goal
Mega counties	0.01%	1.25%	2.5%	8,400	same as certified goal

\*\* Maintaining goals are a combination of certified goals and actual maintaining goals

Counties will submit updated population and labor force data every two years in order for maintaining goals to be recalculated. For statewide programs, the state ACT Work Ready Communities team will provide updated demographic data every two years for all counties to recalculate goals during the maintaining status phase.

ADDITIONAL MAINTAINING CRITERIA (counties select one)	
<b>Improving certificate levels</b>	Certificate level improvement based on 30% of Bronze-level ACT NCRCs earned over past 12 months
<b>Job profiles completed</b>	Small county: one job profile Medium county: three job profiles Large county (A and B): five job profiles Very large county: eight job profiles Mega county: 12 job profiles
<b>ACT NCRC for college credit</b>	Community or technical college will provide college credit for the ACT NCRC, according to American Council on Education guidelines

For more information, visit [workreadycommunities.org](https://workreadycommunities.org).