



Application Package

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 by adopting their established goals of individuals participating by earning a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and businesses participating by recognizing, preferring or recommending the NCRC in their hiring practice.



Sponsored by:
Missouri Workforce Development Board

CWRC APPLICATION PACKET CONTENTS

1. FAQ's
2. Checklist to apply
3. Criteria for certification
4. Application
5. Letters of Commitment Sample

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 Development Board (MWDB), which will make the final determination for certification.

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. Missouri Workforce Development Board 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 Director or submit questions via email at cwrc@ded.mo.gov. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Bill Skains, Chairman
Missouri Workforce Development Board

Frequently Asked Questions

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 included in a regional economic development area may be encouraged to apply.
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 completed using the online application form, or completed and submitted mailed to:

CWRC Director
PO Box 1087
Jefferson City, MO 65102
cwrc@ded.mo.gov

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. For more information, visit the ACT NCRC page at: www.act.org/certificate. The NCRC measures skills employers believe are critical to job success.

Missouri Work Ready Communities

Individuals can earn the NCRC by taking three WorkKeys® assessments:

- Applied Math
- Locating Information
- Reading for Information

7. **Where does an individual obtain an NCRC?** The certificates can be obtained as an enrolled job seeking customer at one of the state’s 31 Missouri Job Centers. The Missouri Community Colleges may offer this service to employers and incumbent workers. Some secondary schools and a number of vocational programs also 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 Missouri Workforce Development Board (MWDB) is Governor appointed board and has the responsibility for providing leadership for workforce development in Missouri. The MWDB and may grant two categories of certification. The Work Ready “In Progress” status is designated for communities who have not yet reached the goals set for them, but has plans in place to achieve those goals. The “In Progress” status will be granted by MWDB 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 MWDB.
10. **When can we apply?** You may apply at any time. Applications are reviewed four times a year. Please refer to the [MWDB webpage](https://jobs.mo.gov/community/mo-workforce-development-board).
(<https://jobs.mo.gov/community/mo-workforce-development-board>)
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 Development Board (MWDB), who shall then have the final vote.

Missouri Work Ready Communities

CWRC CERTIFICATION 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 establish 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 ACT Work Ready Communities site (<https://www.workreadycommunities.org>) 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 of this letter may be found in the application package. The name of the primary contact person for the CWRC will need to be included.

✓ **Submit to:**

CWRC Director
PO Box 1087
Jefferson City, MO 65102
cwrc@ded.mo.gov

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:

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 <https://www.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.

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

To complete the Business Partnership Letter online, go to:

<https://jobs.mo.gov/employer/ncrc/partnership-letter>

To print the Business Partnership Letter, go to:

<https://jobs.mo.gov/sites/jobs/files/ncrc-cwrc-employer-rev-aug2015.pdf>

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, and 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.

CWRC APPLICATION INFORMATION

1. Name of County

2. Commitment of Key Stakeholders

The steering committee must be compromised at a minimum of individuals representing the following stakeholders.

Stakeholder	Organization Name
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. (Refer to 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 (three pages maximum) from your community team 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. I am including narrative(s) for supplemental criteria? **YES** **NO**
 (Please attach narratives for supplemental criteria.)

5. Steering Leader Contact Information

(This is the primary contact for your county application.)

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Please check to ensure you have included everything required before submitting your application.

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	
Any supplemental information included (<i>optional</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:

Company Contact Name:

Contact Title/Role:

Contact Phone Number:

Contact Email:

Contact Address:

City:

County:

Zip:

Signature

Date