



James Monroe Building
101 North 14th Street, 17th Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Phone: 804-819-1680
Fax: 804-819-1699

December 1, 2010

The Honorable Robert McDonnell
Governor's Office
Patrick Henry Building, Third Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor McDonnell:

In accordance with §2.2-2674.01 of the Code of Virginia, it is my distinct pleasure to transmit to you, on behalf of the Virginia Workforce Council, an annual report of outcomes for the Virginia Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) Program.

Since the legislation approval in 2008 to establish the CRC in the Virginia Code and authorize funding to support it, the program has seen a significant increase in activity. We anticipate achieving continued success. A total of 5,708 CRCs were attained in fiscal year 2010, representing a 10 percent increase over last year. The CRC program continues to be supported by a combination of federal and state funding and in-kind resources

In order to elevate the profile of the CRC, we recommend that the Governor and General Assembly encourage state agencies to implement the CRC as a hiring criterion or as a tool to assess and increase skills of existing state employees. This would significantly enhance the visibility of the certificate, and it would embrace the CRC as the valuable and effective instrument that the Governor and the Virginia Workforce Council have endorsed it to be.

We welcome your feedback and support in the coming months.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. P. Leber".

Dr. Robert P. Leber
Chairman, Virginia Workforce Council

RPL: csd

Cc: The Honorable Terry Kilgore, Chair, House Committee on Commerce and Labor
The Honorable Robert Tata, Chair, House Committee on Education
The Honorable Richard Saslaw, Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor
The Honorable Edward Houck, Chair, Senate Committee on Education and Health

Enclosure: Career Readiness Certificate Program - Project Status

VIRGINIA CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE
Project Status
December 1, 2010

Since January 2008, with support from the Virginia Workforce Council (VWC), the numbers of Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) recipients continue to grow to certify the workplace readiness skills of Virginians.

The CRC program's basis is the ACT developed skills database, which contains more than 17,000 detailed job profiles, representing one of the largest databases in existence today. These profiles were produced by ACT-trained profilers to analyze each job with the help of subject matter experts (employees already doing the job successfully and their management) to define the tasks and skills needed to perform the job to acceptable levels of performance. By matching the job profile information with individual scores on the WorkKeys® assessments, employers are equipped to make reliable decisions about hiring and training.

As required by the CRC legislation passed during the 2008 General Assembly session, VWC adopted a budget to develop outreach and incentive activities to enhance and expand Virginia's CRC program. For FY 2010, the budget included more than \$250,000 from a combination of federal and state funds as well as in-kind resources to support the continued implementation of the CRC. Since the legislation was approved, the program has seen a significant increase in activity.

The Community College Workforce Alliance (CCWA) continues to provide leadership for the CRC initiative, as established by a contract between CCWA and the Virginia Community College System in 2008. CCWA is the workforce development partnership of J. Sargeant Reynolds and John Tyler Community Colleges.

In Fall 2010, a CRC coordinator was hired to strengthen statewide outreach for the CRC, monitor performance and build up regional consortia of community colleges, workforce investment boards and One-Stop Career Centers in an effort to continue to stimulate additional growth for Virginia's CRC program.

Continued licenses with software providers, WIN and KeyTrain, allow community colleges and One-Stop Centers to administer Internet-based, skill gap-training to assist CRC test-takers to improve their test scores.

Community colleges, paired with their local One-Stops, improved partnerships with businesses, enhanced outreach efforts and saw increases in the number of CRCs achieved from the previous year. In FY2010, Virginia awarded 5,708 CRCs, which was a 10 percent increase over the previous year. Over the lifetime of this program, over 25,000 Virginians have received a CRC.

In July 2010, the VCCS invited government and state agency leaders to an informational session on the CRC. These leaders had an opportunity to complete the CRC giving them hands-on experience of the assessment.

The Virginia Community College System continued a contract with ACT so all community colleges can participate as members of the WorkKeys® Solutions Provider Network. This will provide new ways for the colleges to build long-term relationships with local employers and meet the needs of job seekers, workers and local businesses through expanded use of the CRC.

An enhanced statewide CRC database and website will be completed by Winter 2011 providing a user-friendly tool for employers to search data on the skill levels of Virginia's workforce. The database will also provide employers, jobseekers and economic development and workforce professionals with information about the CRC. A search is underway to engage a vendor to develop and maintain the more robust set of requirements needed for a CRC database and website as the program grows.

Below is a regional breakdown of bronze, silver, and gold CRCs awarded between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010.

FY 2010 Career Readiness Certificates in Virginia				
WIB REGION	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD	TOTAL CRC'S
Alexandria/Arlington	5	8	2	15
Bay Consortium	44	122	26	192
Capital Region	228	564	190	982
Crater Region	210	368	84	662
Greater Peninsula	85	203	57	345
Hampton Roads	173	416	143	732
New River/Mt. Rogers	66	132	52	250
Northern Virginia	208	490	273	971
Piedmont Workforce Network	22	52	17	91
Region 2000/Central Virginia	92	141	40	273
Shenandoah Valley	101	211	84	396
South Central Virginia	99	206	41	346
Southwest Virginia	25	76	23	124
West Piedmont	64	122	10	196
Western Virginia	25	80	28	133
STATE TOTAL	1,447	3,191	1,070	5,708

To sustain the progress that has been made, the VWC has budgeted \$200,000 to support the CRC initiative in FY 2011.

In order to accelerate the CRC initiative, it is recommended that the Commonwealth, as an employer, implement the use of the CRC program as a hiring criterion or as a tool to assess and increase skills of existing state employees for all state agencies. If state agencies would require the CRC be one of the required qualifications for all classified staff positions, not only would it significantly enhance the visibility of the certificate, but it would also demonstrate that the Commonwealth of Virginia is utilizing the Governor's endorsed certificate of workforce readiness. In addition to benefiting state agencies and institutions in their efforts to hire qualified employees, the CRC can also be used to periodically assess the skills of the current workforce and identify skill gaps that can be remedied through use of the statewide gap-training software. While several very notable employers, including Northrop Grumman, Inova Health Systems, Canon Virginia, and MeadWestvaco, play a key role in marketing the CRC's value, one of the goals during the coming year is to persuade one of the Commonwealth's largest employers, state government, to embrace the CRC as an effective assessment instrument of foundational workplace skills.

Contact: Virginia Community College System 804-819-1680