

VIRGINIA CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE 2011 Annual Report

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 Virginia CRC is based on ACT's WorkKeys® assessments – Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information – that provide individuals a workplace skills certification that employers can use to make reliable decisions on hiring and training. By putting the right people in the right jobs, businesses can be more productive and profitable.

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. The budget included \$900,000 available from FY2008 through FY2012. The funding is a combination of federal and state funds as well as in-kind resources to support the continued implementation of the CRC.

In collaboration with the Virginia Community College System, the Community College Workforce Alliance (CCWA) provides leadership through FY 2012 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.

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 FY2011, Virginia awarded approximately 7,500 CRCs which was a 30 percent increase over the previous year. Over the lifetime of this program, over 25,000 Virginians have received a CRC.

Continued licenses with software providers, WIN and KeyTrain, allow community colleges and One-Stop Centers to administer Internet-based, interactive training to provide comprehensive learning systems for emerging, transitional and incumbent workers on common skills required by all jobs based on ACT's WorkKeys® assessment system.

The CRC has been approved by the Virginia Board of Education as an industry recognized credential that may substitute for the student-selected verified credit toward graduation requirements. State funds for the career and technical education student industry certifications can be used to pay for the CRC.

A revised website –www.crc.virginia.gov – and database was launched to provide employers, jobseekers and economic development and workforce professionals with information about the CRC. The site provides a user-friendly tool for employers to search data on the skill levels of Virginia's workforce.

Governor McDonnell presented a public service announcement declaring the impact of the CRC to Virginia's economy by increasing the credentialing and building Virginia's workforce. Other brief testimonials by employers and certificate holders spout the benefits of the CRC for building connections between employer and the workforce.

A CRC Advisory Council made up of business, economic development, education and workforce leaders is meeting to develop strategies to expand the use of the CRC by education, workforce development and employers.

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