

East County Campus Advisory Board

Agenda March 9, 2016, 4:30 p.m.

- I. **Welcome, Introductions** (Marci)
- II. **Current news, issues of which the college should be aware** (Rebecca)
- III. **Celebrations**
 - a. Rob's new venture
 - b. EVCC Aspen Award Nomination
- IV. **Presentation by Teri Reade on the National Career Readiness Certificate**
- V. **Old Business**
 - a. Program Updates (Ryan)
 - i. Latino Outreach Initiative
 - ii. Testing Center
 - iii. IBEST Programs in Spring
 - b. Advisory Board Committee updates
 - i. Student Enrollment update (Marci; Dan)
 - ii. Community Connections update (Gene; Carolyn)
 - iii. Economic Development update (Debbie)
 - iv. Membership update (Eric)
- VI. **New business**
 - a. East County Director Position (Ryan)
 - b. East County Campus Update (Rob)
 - c. College Report (David)
- VII. **Board Discussion**

Topic: Our Community is undergoing significant change due to (among many things) the improving economic conditions, population growth in Puget Sound, and rapidly rising housing prices. To help the college adapt to these changing conditions please share:

 - a. How these changes have affected your organization (Both good and bad)
 - b. Ideas on what the college needs to do to be "ahead of the curve" in this environment

Future Meeting Dates for 2015 – 2016

Thursday, June 9, 2016

GETTING STARTED WITH NCRC

RECOGNIZE/REQUEST THE NCRC:

Employers can attract qualified and motivated job applicants by simply expressing a preference for the NCRC in their job postings. Your organization is invited to sign a Letter of Support in recognition of this credential.

www.WorkReadyWA.org

The name of your organization will be added to a list of WA State employers, which is visible to job seekers. Currently, over 10,000 employers recognize the NCRC nationwide.

REQUIRE THE NCRC: Employers have benefitted by embedding the NCRC into HR processes such as candidate selection, promotions, training decisions and apprenticeships. Job Profiling is the first step to “requiring” the NCRC. The profiling process provides evidence of the level of NCRC-related skills required to do a job. Applicants can then be tested to assure that they possess those skills.

MCC Agenda 09/15/2016
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CENTER OF EXCELLENCE for Aerospace and Advanced Manufacturing

Thank you for your interest in the ACT NCRC.
For further information on the ACT NCRC or
Work Ready Washington, please contact:

Teri Reade - Workforce Development Coordinator
Center of Excellence for Aerospace
& Advanced Manufacturing
treade@everettcc.edu
425-388-9343

WorkReadyWA.org



Washington Integrated
Sector Employment

WISE will fund 800 students who are enrolled in a WISE supported program, to take the ACT NCRC.

Call Work Ready Washington (above) for details.

WISE, 100% funded by a \$10M U.S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) Round 4 grant (#TC-26512-14-60-A-53), is led by Centralia College and the Center of Excellence for Clean Energy in partnership with the Centers of Excellence for Aerospace & Advance Manufacturing and Construction. Everett Community College is an equal opportunity employer/program and auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

NATIONAL CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE



STREAMLINES
HIRING

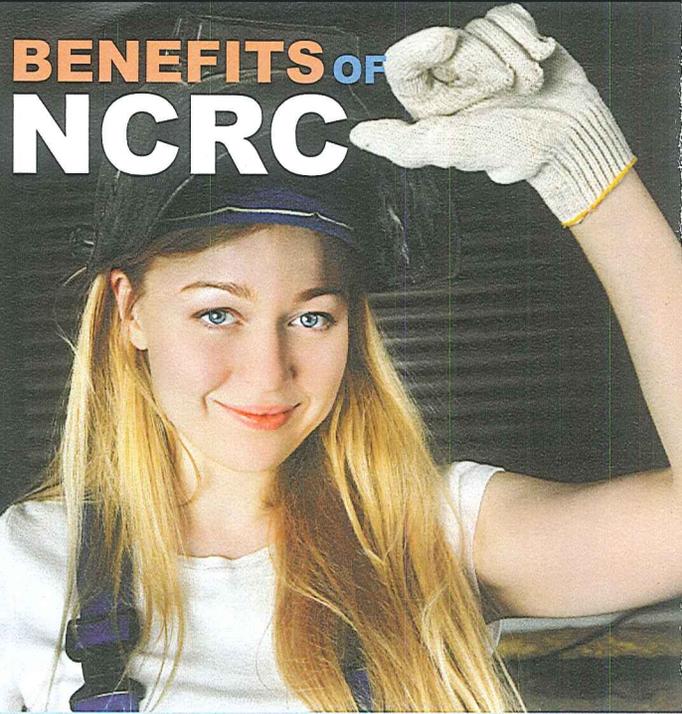
INCREASES
EMPLOYEE
RETENTION



INCREASES
EMPLOYEE
MORALE

CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
for Aerospace and Advanced Manufacturing

BENEFITS OF NCRC



The NCRC can be earned by taking three WorkKeys® Assessments



Applied Mathematics

1

Reading for Information

2

Locating Information

3

National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) is composed of the following three assessments that measure skills critical to on-the-job success.

- 1 Applied Mathematics:** Applying mathematical reasoning to related work problems.
- 2 Reading for Information:** Comprehending work-related reading e.g., memos, policy manuals, and governmental regulations.
- 3 Locating Information:** Using information to make decisions (critical thinking). Improves local business climate focus.

Certificates are awarded at four different levels:

BRONZE

Scores Level 3 or higher on each assessment. Possesses foundational skills required for 16% of jobs.*

SILVER

Scores Level 4 or higher on each assessment. Possesses foundational skills required for 67% of jobs.*

GOLD

Scores Level 5 or higher on each assessment. Possesses foundational skills required for 93% of jobs.*

PLATINUM

Scores Level 6 or higher on each assessment. Possesses foundational skills required for 99% of jobs.*

*Approximate percentage based on jobs in the WorkKeys® occupational profile database. Mayor/Administrative Reports #2

The NCRC is a nationally recognized credential developed by ACT. It measures foundational skills in three critical areas that are shown to predict success in the workplace: Applied Mathematics, Reading Comprehension, & Critical Thinking. These skills are measured using workplace related scenarios.

The NCRC, when used with other hiring metrics, can:

- Streamline hiring
- Increase employee retention
- Increase productivity & employee morale

With over 3 million National Career Readiness Certificates issued, job applicants are using the NCRC to demonstrate their level of work readiness in order to stand out from the crowd.



The **WISE Grant** (Washington Integrated Sector Employment) is a nearly \$10 million dollar project funded by the U.S. Dept. of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College & Career Training (TAACCT) Round 4. This grant includes a **consortium of three Centers of Excellence**: Clean Energy, Aerospace & Advanced Manufacturing, and Construction, along with eight community and technical colleges:

- **Bates Technical College**
- **Centralia College**
- **Everett Community College**
- **Green River College**
- **Renton Technical College**
- **Shoreline Community College**
- **South Seattle College**
- **Walla Walla Community College**



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CONVENE. PROBLEM SOLVE. DISSEMINATE.

ACT[®] National Career Readiness Certificate[™]

- As part of the WISE Grant, several industry-recognized credentials will be awarded to students who qualify, including **ACT's National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC)**.
- Just as ACT's college entrance exam has predicted student success in college for over 50 years, **the NCRC (based on WorkKeys[®] tests) predicts success in the workplace.**
- **Over 3 million National Career Readiness Certificates** have been issued nationwide
- The NCRC measures an individual's ability to utilize basic skills in a workplace environment ("**Foundational Skills**")





NATIONAL CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE®

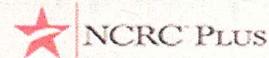
A **Gold** National Career Readiness Certificate is awarded to

JANE P. SAMPLE

In recognition of verified skills essential to workplace success and career advancement.



Registered Certificate # JSAMPLE001
Issue Date: July 26, 2011



- ★★★★ Work Discipline
- ★★ Teamwork
- ★★★ Customer Service Orientation
- ★ Managerial Potential



Official National Career Readiness Certificate Registered by ACT



A Comprehensive Suite of Assessments Measuring Workplace Skills

**8 skills commonly required in jobs that have been “profiled.”
(ACT’s WorkKeys® Assessments measure skill levels in these areas)**

Communication

- Business Writing
- Listening for Understanding
- * **Reading for Information**

Interpersonal Skills

- Teamwork

Problem Solving

- * **Applied Mathematics**
- Applied Technology
- * **Locating Information**
- Workplace Observation

* **Assessments included in the NCRC**



Out of 20,000 jobs profiled, 80% REQUIRE ALL THREE OF THESE SKILLS

These are the three assessments that make up the NCRC:

Reading for Information

Utilize memos, letters, directions, signs, notices, bulletins, policies and regulations. Read and interpret the content to respond to questions.

Applied Mathematics

Set up and apply mathematical reason, critical thinking and problem-solving techniques to problems that actually occur in the workplace.

Locating Information

Find information in a graphic or insert information into a graphic.
Compare, summarize and analyze information found in related graphics to draw conclusions and make decisions.



Certificates are awarded at four different skill levels (measuring depth of skills):

Bronze

Scores **Level 3** or higher on each assessment.

Possesses foundational skills required for 16% of jobs. *

Silver

Scores **Level 4** or higher on each assessment.

Possesses foundational skills required for 67% of jobs. *

Gold

Scores **Level 5** or higher on each assessment.

Possesses foundational skills required for 93% of jobs. *

Platinum

Scores **Level 6** or higher on each assessment.

Possesses foundational skills required for 99% of jobs. *

* Approximate percentage based on jobs in the WorkKeys occupational profile database

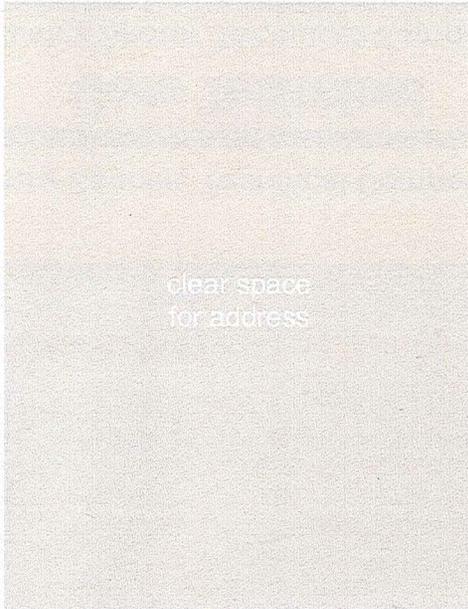
All Platinum Certificates in WA are now signed by the Governor
Only 1% of certificates issued are Platinum

The **ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™ (ACT NCRC®)** is an assessment-based credential powered by ACT WorkKeys®. Issued at four levels, the ACT NCRC certifies the foundational work skills needed for success in jobs across industries and occupations.

The certificate holder has earned a **Platinum ACT NCRC**. A **Platinum** certificate indicates achievement of a **Level 6** or above on each of the ACT WorkKeys assessments that comprise the ACT NCRC.

The certificate holder's Level Score on each individual assessment is provided below. The types of skills measured by each assessment are described at right.

Certificate holder **Jane P. Sample**
ACT WorkKeys Applied Mathematics **7**
ACT WorkKeys Locating Information **6**
ACT WorkKeys Reading for Information **7**



The **ACT WorkKeys Applied Mathematics** assessment measures the ability to apply mathematic principles to math-related problems encountered in the workplace. The assessment measures five skill levels, and each level builds on the skills measured in the previous levels.

Level 7 earners can translate complex textual information into more advanced numeric expressions and perform calculations based on multiple separate mathematic operations. Information provided in Level 7 test questions may be incomplete.

Level 6 earners can translate complex textual information into numeric expressions and perform calculations based on multiple separate mathematic operations.

Level 5 earners can set up and solve mathematic problems that require multistep calculations based on several separate mathematic operations.

Level 4 earners can set up and solve mathematic problems that require several separate mathematic operations. Level 4 test questions may include extraneous information.

Level 3 earners can set up and solve mathematic problems commonly encountered in the workplace that require one-step mathematic operations.

The **ACT WorkKeys Locating Information** assessment measures the ability to find, analyze, and apply information presented in workplace graphics. The assessment measures four skill levels, and each level builds on the skills measured in the previous levels.

Level 6 earners can draw conclusions based on information found in one or more specialized or technical workplace graphics, including the ability to make predictions based on observed patterns.

Level 5 earners can draw conclusions based on information found in one or more complex workplace graphics, including the ability to apply information to situations not described in the scenario presented.

Level 4 earners can compare and summarize information found in one or more common workplace graphics.

Level 3 earners can find information presented in common workplace graphics and fill in information required by work-related forms.

The **ACT WorkKeys Reading for Information** assessment measures the ability to understand and apply information presented in workplace documents. The assessment measures five skill levels, and each level builds on the skills measured in the previous levels.

Level 7 earners can synthesize and apply information presented in one or more complex workplace documents. These documents are dense and include difficult concepts or descriptions of complicated procedures.

Level 6 earners can analyze and synthesize information presented in one or more complex workplace documents and requires inferences about the definition of specialized technical terms.

Level 5 earners can apply information presented in one or more complex workplace documents to situations not described in the test question and may require inferences about the definition of uncommon terms.

Level 4 earners can apply information presented in common workplace documents to situations not described in the test question.

Level 3 earners can understand terms, apply instructions, and identify the main ideas presented in common workplace documents.

Share Your ACT NCRC with Employers

Each ACT NCRC credential is registered in the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate database. If you take action to share your certificate (go to www.act.org/certificate/order.html for more information), it may be verified at www.act.org/certificate/verify.html. Include information about your achievement on the ACT NCRC on your resume or job applications and invite prospective employers to verify its authenticity:

ACT NCRC Level: [enter the level you have earned]
Registered Certificate #: [enter the ID found on the front of your certificate]
Issue Date: [enter the date on which you earned the certificate]

Dept. of Labor's Employment and Training Initiative Competency Models . . .

. . . all include similar foundational skills



Foundational Skills: Basic skills that cut across all industry sectors (bottom three layers)

Workplace competencies: Do workers use critical thinking skills, work in teams, and have problem solving skills?

Basic applied skills in reading, writing, math, and locating information: Can workers communicate effectively, follow key instructions, and read manuals?

Personal effectiveness: Will prospective employees show up on time, be dependable, and demonstrate initiative?

Accessed 5/7/15 on www.careeronestop.org/competencymodel

Across industries AND occupations . . .

. . . the NCRC serves as evidence of foundational skills

The National Career Readiness Certificate is Endorsed by:

- American Association of Community Colleges
- Manufacturing 21 Coalition
- National Association of Manufacturers
- The Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD)
- The National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER)

**Over 12,000 employers recognize the NCRC
and that number increases daily**

www.workreadycommunities.org



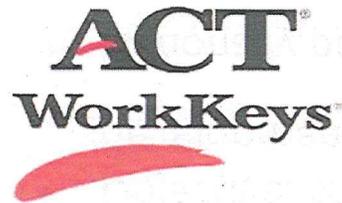
Employers benefit from adopting ACT's "WorkKeys System":

- Reduced time to hire through expedited hiring processes
- Reduced training time, due to better matching of candidates to jobs
- Higher employee morale
- Reduced turnover
- Identify "Diamonds in the rough" for promotion and fast-track
- Greater productivity and higher net profit per piece, due to impact of reduced hiring time and turnover
- Improved efficiency and reduction of waste due to better matching of people to jobs and improved training outcomes

The NCRC Benefits Students and Career Seekers

- Provides a competitive advantage over other job applicants
- Helps build confidence that skills meet the need of local employers
- Enhances employability and sets the stage for possible career advancement and lifelong learning.
- Verifies work readiness skill level – and possible skill improvements and training needs
- Demonstrates commitment to success
- Objective, standardized data for individuals, employers, schools & economic development
- Nationally portable





WorkKeys® is ACT's comprehensive suite of 11 assessments measuring workplace skills



The **NCRC** is ACT's portable credential that demonstrates an individual's level of achievement for three key foundational WorkKeys® skills.



Work Ready Communities are communities that have met goals (including NCRC's earned, employers recognizing NCRC, and the partnership of educators, policymakers and economic developers)

ACT Work Ready Communities



www.workreadywa.com

Work Ready Communities benefit . . .

- Employers
- Economic development
- Workforce development
- State and Local Leadership
- Labor
- K-12 education
- Colleges and other Training Organizations
- Washington State



Work-Ready Communities are Employer-Driven!!

If employers wish to see more NCRC-certified applicants:

- We invite them to officially “recognize” the NCRC.
- Company name is added to a list of Washington State employers who understand the NCRC value. This can lead to more job seekers choosing to become certified, and leads certified workers to their door . . .
- . . . Brings the community closer to “Work Ready Community” status.



We are here to help you get started with WorkKeys®

- The Center of Excellence for Aerospace & Advanced Manufacturing can provide assistance to employers who wish to streamline their hiring or training processes using the Work Readiness System
- We now have a certified WorkKeys® Proctor / ACT-authorized Job Profiler on staff.

Teri Reade - (425) 388-9343 – treade@everettcc.edu



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CONVENE. PROBLEM SOLVE. DISSEMINATE.

ACT[®] National Career Readiness Certificate[™]



ACT certifies that
Certificate Holder

has earned the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate[™] at the **Gold** level.

Registered Certificate # XXXXXXXX
Issue Date: XXXXXXXXX

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Certificate Holder Name

ACT WorkKeys Applied Mathematics **6**
ACT WorkKeys Locating Information **5**
ACT WorkKeys Reading for Information **6**

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Registered Certificate #: [enter the ID found on the front of your certificate]

Issue Date: [enter the date on which you earned the certificate]





ACT job profiling

Just ask any business leader: skill shortages are an expensive, time-wasting barrier to effective hiring and training. How can employers determine which individuals are the best fit for highly skilled positions, or which workers are the top candidates to receive job-specific training?

This is why nearly 75 percent of businesses use job analysis—the process of analyzing the skills needed for job tasks—in their recruiting and hiring practices, according to a recent study by Society for Human Resource Management and ACT. With job analysis:

- **Employers** can identify skills and skill levels current and prospective employees need in order to be successful on the job.
- **Individuals** can compare their skill levels to those needed for jobs.
- **Trainers and trainees** can make appropriate decisions about jobs, identify strengths, and set training goals.

The ACT job analysis method—ACT job profiling—links job tasks with ACT WorkKeys® job skill assessments to pinpoint benchmarks for hiring, recruiting, advancement, and training. ACT job profiling takes a focus-group approach, using input from employees to ensure customized job analysis.

Benefits of ACT job profiling

ACT job profiling brings the specifics of a job into focus. It provides users with:

- **A detailed, customized task list**—This is the first step in developing a comprehensive job description, training materials, performance appraisal instruments, and other human resources tools.
- **A personalized content validity report**—Your report contains detailed rationale linking job tasks to ACT WorkKeys skill levels.
- **Useful information for hiring, promotion, and training**—Job profiling establishes content validity for the ACT WorkKeys assessments, so you can feel confident using them to make selection, advancement, and training decisions.
- **Employee support**—Employees actively participate in the job profiling process, increasing the likelihood for buy-in and goodwill.



act.org/workkeys

Four key steps to ACT job profiling

Step 1: Initial task list—The profiler creates a task list using national job data and information collected from a company contact person and a tour of the job site.

Step 2: Task analysis—The profiler meets with workers to customize the task list. The job experts rate each task for importance to ensure the tasks are critical to performance of the job.

Step 3: Skill analysis—The profiler helps employees link job tasks to ACT WorkKeys skills and skill levels.

Step 4: Documentation—The profiler documents the results in a customized content validity report.

ACT WorkKeys assessments

ACT WorkKeys assessments measure the “hard skills” (such as math, reading, and writing) and “soft skills” (such as values, interests, and integrity) that business leaders say are necessary in a high-performance workforce. These skills are the building blocks for job-specific skills and affect performance and trainability on the job, according to ACT research.

Additional types of ACT profiles

Curriculum profiles identify the skill levels required for entrance into a program of study and for program completion.

Occupational profiles identify the skill levels required for an occupation across jobs, companies, or industries. Occupational profiles can be used to set instructional standards and develop curricula designed to help students meet the skill requirements for occupations.

Curriculum alignments facilitate objective discussions between employers and educators to identify courses of action that can be taken to update curriculum to meet employer needs. The results from a curriculum profile and a job or occupational profile are the foundation of a curriculum alignment.

Contact information:

Go to act.org/solutions/career-success/job-analysis for more information about ACT job profiling and how it works within the ACT WorkKeys system.

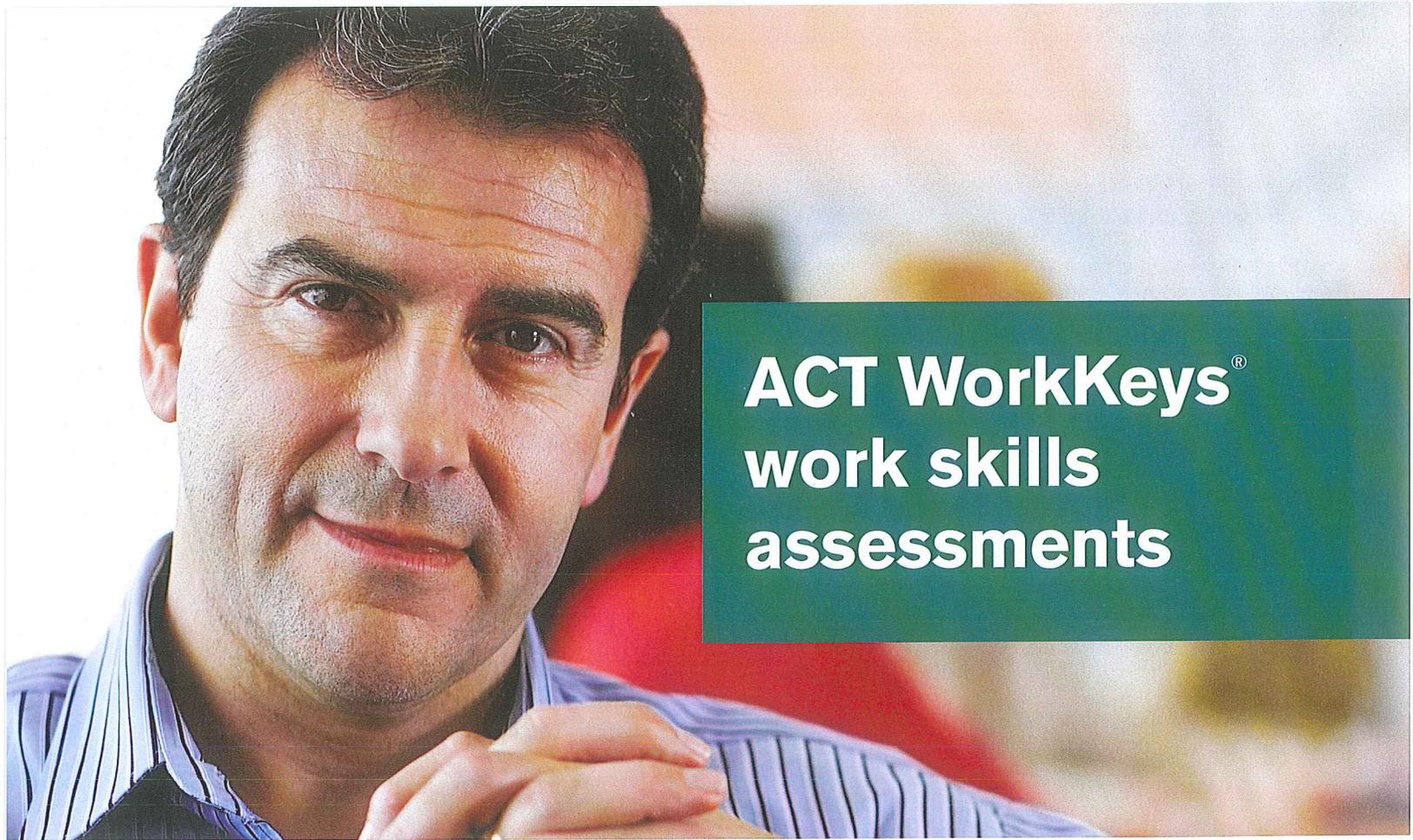
“ACT WorkKeys has saved money. The cost of the revolving door—hiring, training, letting people go—is much higher than hiring the right people with the right skills to begin with. In fact, the revolving door has stopped.”

—Nikki Rodgers, 911 communications coordinator, Lexington County, South Carolina

“The individuals we have hired after implementing testing appear to be more engaged and eager to learn. By applying the safety training and on-the-job training they receive from day one, there has been a direct impact on decreasing safety incidents.”

—Christina Goodrich, PHR, HR generalist, Gilchrist Construction Company





ACT WorkKeys[®] work skills assessments

Nationally recognized indicators of work readiness

ACT WorkKeys assessments are research-based measures of foundational work skills required for success across industries and occupations. They have been used for more than two decades by job seekers, employees, employers, students, educators, administrators, and workforce and economic developers.

ACT WorkKeys assessments measure the cognitive (“hard”) and noncognitive (“soft”) skills needed for success in the workforce.

ACT WorkKeys “hard skill” assessments

- **Applied Mathematics** measures the ability to apply mathematic principles to math-related problems encountered in the workplace
- **Applied Technology** measures the ability to apply principles of electricity, mechanics, fluid dynamics, and thermodynamics to workplace technical problems
- **Business Writing** measures the ability to apply conventions of standard business English to written communication required in the workplace
- **Listening for Understanding** measures the ability to understand and apply oral communication typical of the workplace
- **Locating Information** measures the ability to find, analyze, and apply information presented in workplace graphics
- **Reading for Information** measures the ability to understand and apply written information presented in workplace documents
- **Workplace Observation** measures the ability to understand and apply information acquired through observation

Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information assessments form the basis of the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™ (ACT NCRC®), a nationally portable credential that documents the skills most critical to success in the workplace.

ACT[®] WorkKeys[®]

act.org/workforce

ACT WorkKeys “soft skill” assessments

- **Fit** measures interests and values associated with particular career pathways
- **Performance** measures tendencies toward unsafe or counterproductive work behaviors
- **Talent** measures attitudes and behaviors particularly relevant to success in the workplace

Trusted predictors of work readiness for more than 20 years

ACT WorkKeys assessments are the only workforce skills assessments based on the depth of ACT's knowledge about workforce skill requirements. They are supported by a database with nearly 20,000 job profiles.

In the last two decades, ACT WorkKeys assessments were widely adopted across business, industry, and education.

- Recommended for job applicants by thousands of employers
- Administered annually to millions of job seekers, employees, and students
- Administered to high school juniors and seniors in seven states
- Adopted as the basis of regional and statewide initiatives to attract economic development

Benefits of ACT WorkKeys assessments

ACT WorkKeys has the potential to help:

- **Job seekers and incumbents** improve career outcomes
- **Employers and human resources professionals** improve hiring, training, and promotion decisions
- **Students** succeed in a variety of career pathways
- **Educators** prepare students for postsecondary success
- **Administrators** demonstrate instructional impacts and satisfy federal or state accountability requirements
- **Workforce developers** remediate skills of displaced workers and document their readiness to reenter the job market
- **Economic developers** attract business and industry to local communities
- **Industry associations** build industry- and occupation-specific stackable credentials
- **Policymakers and legislators** develop research-based education and workforce policies

For more information about the ACT WorkKeys assessments, go to act.org/workforce.





NW Natural Fuels Internal Promotions and Employee Success with WorkKeys® Assessments

THE ORGANIZATION:

NW Natural
Portland, Oregon

THE CHALLENGE:

- » Find a way to help ensure employee success upon promotion to a new position based on something more than seniority

THE SOLUTION:

- » Profile all bargaining unit positions to establish tasks and minimum skill levels
- » Post required skill levels for all positions
- » Implement onsite WorkKeys training to develop skills and assessments to measure performance
- » Base promotions on skill level attainment as well as seniority
- » Require assessments of all external applicants

THE RESULTS:

- » Assessment scores provide a better predictor of employee success
- » Employees have a clear career pathway to guide their training
- » Employees have a better appreciation for the skills required for each position and greater confidence that they are equipped to be successful

COMPANY OVERVIEW

NW Natural is a 151-year-old natural gas distribution and storage company headquartered in Portland, Oregon. Serving nearly 670,000 residential and business customers in Northwest Oregon and Southwest Washington, its stated purpose is to “bring warmth, comfort, and convenience to people’s lives, and help businesses and communities succeed.” A public company traded on the New York Stock Exchange, NW Natural posts annual revenues in excess of \$1 billion.

About 70 percent of the company’s 1,060 employees are members of the Office & Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) Local 11. About a decade ago, company management and union leaders agreed that promoting workers based solely on seniority was not working for the company or its employees. Too many employees simply weren’t equipped with the skills they needed to succeed in their new positions. Both parties wanted to continue to respect seniority as one criterion for promotion but felt that adding a skills training and assessment program could enhance the chances for success.

JOB PROFILING TO ESTABLISH MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

As a starting point, company and union management agreed to establish minimum qualifications for each bargaining position. Employees worked with an on-staff ACT-authorized job profiler to analyze tasks and skill levels for every bargaining unit position. Agreeing that any test would have to be objective and validated and would provide a training component to raise skill levels if needed, they agreed to use ACT’s WorkKeys assessments.

NW Natural began using the assessments in October 2002 for any internal promotion to a union position.

“We didn’t want the skills tests to just ‘wash out’ an employee seeking a better opportunity; we wanted our people to have a way to ‘skill up’ to the job they want,” says Dave Williams, NW Natural vice president of utility services. “I think that’s what I love most about ACT’s assessments. And now our employees really ‘get it.’ Many work through the training modules even when they aren’t seeking a promotion. They want to be ready for that next opening when it becomes available.”

Williams cites an example: “If employees would like to move to another position, they can look up the specific WorkKeys scores that are considered minimum for that position. They can take the assessments right here, onsite; see where they are currently; and determine where they need to improve to meet the standards for the job they are interested in pursuing. Once they meet the standards, they can be confident they are highly likely to be successful in the new position.”

Required minimum skill levels are posted for all 130 bargaining unit positions to help union members set their sights on promotion opportunities.

“Before you put a shovel in the ground, how do you know where to dig? You have to read the order. You have to locate specific and important information on that order, and then you have to do some actual locating. You have to take measurements, and you have to do some math. The digging part is not really even the important part. And the consequences of digging in the wrong location could have life-or-death consequences, for you and for others. So tell me you’re not using your head when you do this job.”

— Dave Williams, vice president of utility services, NW Natural

THE UNION / MANAGEMENT RELATIONSHIP

Williams reports that the company has a unique relationship with its bargaining unit. “It’s certainly not typical. Rather than calling our agreement a Collective Bargaining Agreement, we call it a Joint Accord.” The committee that handles negotiations and hears grievances is called the Joint Accord Committee. Williams serves as executive sponsor for the company; the elected head of the union, Mike Richards, serves as executive sponsor for the bargaining unit. There are two co-chairs, one from each group, along with 10 company management members and 10 union members. This committee structure has endured for two decades.

“Whenever I talk about our skills testing around the nation and with other utilities in particular, they are shocked to hear that we have testing requirements for internal candidates. It’s a huge step for a union to agree that there is a place for testing,” says Williams. “Clearly, our union is interested in much more than just wages and benefits.”

Richards, executive secretary and treasurer of OPEIU Local 11, adds, “Our members understand that we are dependent on one another to work as a team if we want to consistently produce an above-average product. When we have the right people in the right place, we help ensure job security and therefore the futures of our members and their families. The relationship we have with company leadership at NW Natural speaks to the commitment we share. Other unions could benefit from this approach.”

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING

Eight WorkKeys assessments are used by NW Natural:

- Applied Mathematics
- Applied Technology
- Listening
- Locating Information
- Observation
- Reading for Information
- Teamwork
- Writing

Employees may work through training modules on any or all of the eight skills as they prepare for future opportunities. The assessments are given onsite once each month. NW Natural has career development personnel on staff in Human Resources to work with employees to build their resumes—not only for possible opportunities within the

company, but also for positions they may be interested in elsewhere. “We’re committed to training and development,” says Zane White, Human Resources Consultant at NW Natural. The company and the union are interested in providing opportunities for success, here or with another employer.”

INITIAL RESISTANCE TO TESTING

Skills assessments were not embraced immediately by all union employees. According to Williams, some said, “If I’m applying for a job as a pipefitter, then test me on how I join two pieces of pipe together. If I’m applying for a job as a ditch digger, then watch me dig a ditch. What does it matter whether I can read or locate information or add numbers?” Williams believes some couldn’t make the connection early on between the tests and their job duties. “We would combat that by saying, ‘Before you put a shovel in the ground, how do you know where to dig? You have to read the order. You have to locate specific and important information on that order, and then you have to do some actual locating. You have to take measurements, and you have to do some math. The digging part is not really even the important part. And the consequences of digging in the wrong location could have life-or-death consequences, for you and for others. So tell me you’re not using your head when you do this job.’”

SKILLS TESTING OF EXTERNAL APPLICANTS

When NW Natural has openings for union positions, applications are screened by the company’s internal recruiters to ensure applicants meet the minimum qualifications. A phone screen may be done, as well. The second step is to administer the required WorkKeys assessments for the open position, and applicants must score at the minimum level or above as defined by the job profile to proceed. All finalists also must pass a drug screen and an interview.

Williams anticipates that as Oregon begins to implement statewide adoption of the National Career Readiness Certificate based on three of the WorkKeys assessments, the Certificate will be a requirement for all applicants. Until then, NW Natural will continue to assess applicants before an interview is granted.

White adds, “I believe that the testing complements our selection process by validating that internal and external candidates have the necessary foundational skills to do the job. It is one more data point to help us select the best applicant.”

BENEFITS

Williams cites three benefits of skills testing:

1. “It is a better predictor of employee success. Those who meet minimum skill levels are more successful in their positions. We have a high level of confidence that when we hire individuals, if they don’t make it, it’s not because they couldn’t read or write or fulfill the technical aspects of the job.”
2. “Our employees now have an inside career track that helps them train and develop. They have a way to prepare for the jobs they really want. It gives them a sense of direction. In the past, they just had to be with the company longer than anyone else applying for that position. The testing provides an objective pathway for them to reach their chosen goals.”
3. “It gives employees a lot of confidence. When they go in to test, they may be nervous. But I’ve seen them come out saying, ‘Oh, wow—this job I’d like to get only requires a 3, and I just scored a 5.’ They get a lot of satisfaction and a lot of confidence from knowing they can perform at a higher level than they may have thought. And even if their scores don’t match the desired position requirement, they can work with an HR professional to get themselves on a developmental plan to reach that goal.”

Williams concludes, “I don’t know of any other mechanism that can accomplish all three. In our company, there was none. Advancement was either a matter of seniority or just luck.”

“Our members understand that we are dependent on one another to work as a team if we want to consistently produce an above-average product. When we have the right people in the right place, we help ensure job security and therefore the futures of our members and their families. The relationship we have with company leadership at NW Natural speaks to the commitment we share. Other unions could benefit from this approach.”

— Mike Richards, executive secretary and treasurer, Office & Professional Employees International Union Local 11

STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION

A 31-year veteran at NW Natural, Williams also serves as Chair of the Oregon Workforce Investment Board (OWIB). Appointed by the governor to assist in developing a five-year strategic plan for the state's workforce system, the majority of Board members represent the private sector. One of the tools the Board recommended was the National Career Readiness Certificate to serve as a statewide credential of foundational workplace skills. As a longtime user of WorkKeys assessments, Williams has become an advocate for the initiative.

"What we keep hearing from the business community is that, bad as it sounds, a high school diploma isn't really an indicator of success," he says. "Businesses told us there has to be a better way to find out if a person can actually read and write and perform, and accepting a high school diploma just wasn't working. Oregon educators are working very hard to build credibility behind the diploma, but in the interim, a National Career Readiness Certificate seemed to be the answer. So that's what the OWIB leadership latched onto and is working hard to promote."

Williams continues, "As a long-term user of this kind of testing, I've been able to travel the state and say, 'Hey, it works. It has been validated. It gives us a better predictor that people will be successful in the jobs they apply for. In fact, we are testing everyone that comes in now.' So of course we encourage others to do the same."

Providing his vision for the future, Williams says, "I am excited about the notion that we could have a ready-made workforce in Oregon. Imagine the potential of having 150,000 certified workers. Just picture how great it would be if everyone coming out of high school had a Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum National Career Readiness Certificate, and every one of them was ready to go to work and be immediately successful. That would be my vision for a bright future."

Learn more at WWW.ACT.ORG/WORKFORCE

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Mayor/Administrative Reports #2

Rev 1



Employer Participation Agreement

We recognize the value of the National Career Readiness Certificate in identifying employment candidates with essential foundational skills for the workplace. Job Seekers may present their NCRC, or make reference to it on their resumes or job applications. To verify a National Career Readiness Certificate, I understand that I may visit www.myworkkeys.com and enter the certificate number a job seeker has provided.

I agree to recognize or recommend the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) at the following level(s). *Please select your organization's level or levels of participation. You may choose more than one:*

_____ **RECOGNIZE** the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) as a viable demonstration of an individual's level of work readiness. Possession of certificate will be credited to potential job candidates in a similar way to other metrics such as education, job history, references or interviewing skills

_____ **RECOMMEND** (prefer, but not require) that job applicants demonstrate their work skills by obtaining the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). At this level of participation, the NCRC is used as a preferred credential, but is not an absolute criterion in the decision to hire.

By signing this endorsement, Employer:

- Understands that it is legal to use the NCRC in the hiring process as long as the NCRC is not the sole selection tool or qualifier. The employer can ask for the NCRC during the hiring process as a guide to applicant quality, but may not use it as the sole measure for hiring unless a job profile has been completed which provides the necessary tool to do so.
- Understands that job seekers interested in applying for posted positions should be referred to their local community college or WorkSource office to gain access to the WorkKeys assessments.
- Permits the Center of Excellence for Aerospace and Advanced Materials Manufacturing and its affiliate organizations to use the employer's name to show support for the NCRC throughout the community.
- Understands that this endorsement is considered valid until the employer requests otherwise in writing to the Center of Excellence for Aerospace and Advanced Materials Manufacturing.

Company Name

Primary Contact Person Name and Title

Phone & Email

Name and Title of Authorized Representative

Signature



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