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As South Carolina moves forward with participating in the national Work Ready Communities initiative, we wanted to provide you with following: overview, funding and application information on the initiative: Please feel free to forward to other stakeholders in your community and if you have additional questions, please feel free to contact any member of the State Leadership Team.

OVERVIEW

The Certified Work Ready Community initiative is a community-based workforce, education, and economic development effort that uses common, fundamental criteria to establish baseline goals for county certification across the nation.

What are the components of becoming a Certified Work Ready Community?

The basic infrastructure builds upon WorkKeys, a valid jobs skills assessment system, and the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), a portable, industry-recognized credential, earned from taking the 3 core WorkKeys assessments, reading for information, math and locating information.

Certification is based on a number of individuals earning the NCRC, in order to identify workplace competencies, within the following groups:

- Current (public and private sector workers)
- Transitioning (unemployed and adult education participants)
- Emerging (high school juniors and seniors only and college students)

Counties in participating states will have 2 years from the date of their approved application to meet their required goals.

Why is South Carolina involved with this initiative?

To assist counties in truly linking and aligning state and local economic development, workforce development and education efforts to show new, current and expanding businesses that South Carolina has the workforce and expertise they need in order to grow and prosper. South Carolina was chosen as 1 of the first 4 pilot states in the country to implement such an initiative.

How is South Carolina assisting counties with this initiative?

By providing 2 key elements: Funding and Leadership.

State Leaders have created the framework to ensure the initiative is successful and to assist counties in implementing this initiative locally.

FUNDING INFORMATION

Multiple state and federal funding sources through numerous agencies have been pooled to provide the resources needed for SC counties to meet the national goals.

Costs for this initiative will be covered through an initial two year period. Assessments and other associated costs will be made available through and for public testing sites to include: SC Works Centers, Technical Colleges, Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation Centers and High Schools (only for students).

Additional guidance and information for public testing sites will be provided through their respective state oversight agency: Vocational Rehabilitation, State Technical College System, SC Department of Employment, and Workforce and the SC Department of Education.

Test sites will be asked to provide monthly or quarterly reports on the number of assessments in order to monitor the number of assessments to control cost underruns/overruns.

What costs are covered?

WorkKeys assessments for the 3 core tests (Math, Reading for Information and Locating Information) for the emerging, transitional and current workforce. Individuals are limited to one battery of tests per year.

WorkKeys Talent assessment for individuals earning an NCRC within a county. The Talent assessment is only available via internet so sites that only use paper/pencil will not be able to take advantage of this. The county has the flexibility to determine who can access the Talent assessment. The WorkKeys Talent assessment measures four personality indices to include:

- work discipline
- teamwork
- managerial potential
- customer service orientation

Although the state does not have access to an unlimited number of the 3-battery and Talent assessments, the state has negotiated a number far to exceed all county required goals.

NCRC registration fees and printing costs, obtained through SC Works Centers, Technical Colleges, Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation Centers and School Districts.

Test Site License Fees for public testing sites referenced previously. Current testing sites will be required to complete an online registration to participate under the statewide contract.

Career Ready 101 available through all city, county and state government portals. Provides tutorial training courseware that aligns with core assessments (KeyTrain), Personal Skills that are assessed through Talent, and additional life skills modules. There will be an online registration process for any city, state, county agency to obtain Career Ready 101. Webinars will be scheduled to provide training for Career Ready 101 usage.

In order to ensure that individuals are prepared to score the minimum required to earn a NCRC and to score as well as they can, we suggest you encourage individuals to take advantage of the Career Ready 101 prior to taking the assessments.

In addition to ACT's Career Ready 101, WIN Career Readiness Courseware is still available, at no cost through June 2013, to agencies working in partnership with the SC Department of Employment and Workforce.

Job Profiling license fees and training for SC ACT Certified Profilers as of December 2012. Additional information regarding any new profilers certified through ACT and how they can participate in the SC

Work Ready Communities initiative will be forthcoming.

Job Profile costs reimbursed up to \$1,500 per profile for a business, within a SC Work Ready Community or Community In Progress. A maximum number of profiles per business will be established.

What costs are not covered?

Costs associated with the proctoring of internet based or paper/pencil WorkKeys assessments through the public testing sites referenced above.

Costs for any re-testing of individuals not meeting the minimum required score and/or individuals wanting to upgrade their credential more than once a year.

Costs for any additional WorkKeys Talent assessment not covered in the state contract.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

SC counties will be given the opportunity to "apply" for participation in this initiative.

How does a County apply?

Go to www.scworkready.org

When is the first application round?

February 1, 2013. Applications will be accepted bi-annually; however, counties applying in the first round will have the advantage of having certificates counted from 2012 as ACT started counting data when SC began participating in this initiative.

- Certificates earned in 2012 will not be counted for counties coming in after the initial application round and will also have a more current set of goals to be met, as defined by ACT. ACT and the four pilot states are working together to define these measures as well as maintenance of goals for re-certification in the next several months.
- Once county applications have been approved, counties will be shown as a participating county on the national Certified Work Ready Communities website: www.workreadycommunities.org

How detailed does the application have to be?

Counties will need to map-out how they plan to meet their county goals within a two-year period. Commitment letters from individuals participating in the local steering committees and charged with the success of this program locally are also required.

Can an application be denied?

Only if there are missing components of the applications and an unrealistic plan of how a county plans to achieve their goals.

What if the plan to meet county goals isn't working?

Counties will have the opportunity to monitor their progress and change accordingly, with revisions submitted to and approved by the state.

Why are county applications approved by the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB)?

The SC Work Ready Communities initiative is a multi-agency, public/private partnership initiative. Although this is strictly a locally driven initiative, funding is being provided with federal and state monies; application approval and statewide oversight is needed by a statewide entity. The State

Workforce Investment Board, a business majority run board, works with an unbiased goal of improving the prosperity of businesses and the lives of South Carolinians. The SWIB will serve as the statewide entity to oversee the SC Work Ready Communities initiative.

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