

Sole Source Justification

In order to effectively match job-seekers with businesses and facilitate career ladder opportunities in the state, a job skills assessment system is being pursued for a state level umbrella contract that will assist communities with identifying the skill sets of their emerging, transitioning and currently employed individuals. ACT, a non-profit entity, has an all-inclusive system comprised of four components: 1). WorkKeys Assessment, a job skills assessment system that measures foundational and soft skills, 2). National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), a nationally recognized, portable credential that demonstrates achievement and a certain level of workplace employability skills in Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information, 3). Career Ready 101, which is a training courseware directly aligned to the various WorkKeys Assessments, 4). Job Profiles, a job analysis tool for businesses to understand the skills required for specific positions. Although there are multiple vendors that provide training courseware, one primary vendor was acquired by ACT in order for them to specifically align their courseware with the assessments. Additionally, ACT 1). created a Talent WorkKeys Assessment that evaluates soft skills (or life skills) of an individual, 2). provides the courseware that aligns with the Talent Assessment and 3). issues an NCRC Plus for these individuals whose foundational skills, as well as soft skills, meet recognized criteria. A thorough survey of business leaders across South Carolina in 2009 concluded that “most of the failures among individuals in their job placement are because of deficiencies in soft skill development and not in technical expertise”.

Since ACT is the only provider of assessments, training courseware and job profiling, SC is in a position to negotiate a better pricing structure in order for public entities to utilize the complete system for their students, clients, and constituents.

Other states have issued sole-source contracts with ACT, for all or a portion of ACT products, to include Kentucky and Utah.