

Oregon's National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)—Overview

To compete in the global market and thrive, our state's manufacturers need employees who are proficient in the crucial skills that meet the rising demands of 21st century jobs.

Oregon's National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) is a hiring tool that addresses concerns voiced by Oregon's business community, namely access to qualified job applicants. Individuals who earn a certificate have demonstrated that they can apply the critical foundational skills that nearly every job uses. When an employer incorporates the NCRC into its hiring practices, it serves as an additional, objective measure of an applicant's fit for a job. It also becomes a valuable training tool to help employees advance.

In 2009, the Manufacturing Institute, an affiliate of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), introduced the NAM-Endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System. This industry-defined, competency-based certificate system recognizes the NCRC as the nation's most reliable foundational skills credential.

"As the foundation of the Manufacturing Skills Certification System, the National Career Readiness Certificate clearly provides the emphasis on...general workplace skills," said Emily Stover DeRocco, president of The Manufacturing Institute and senior vice president of the NAM.

Martin Scaglione, president and chief operating officer of ACT's Workforce Development Division, said ACT and the NAM share similar missions. "We both know that growth of our economy can happen only if the education and skills of our workforce also grow. We know the keystone of any skills training program is foundational skills, and that's where the National Career Readiness Certificate comes into play. It certifies the core skills that are applicable across the diverse manufacturing industry."

Oregon's NCRC, which is EEOC compliant, will be available statewide by the end of 2010.

A Unique Certification for Oregon's Workforce

The NCRC is unique because it measures *applied* skill in three core areas:

- Applied Mathematics
- Reading for Information
- Locating Information

This makes the certificate relevant for people with all levels of experience, for jobs at every point on the skill continuum and in nearly any industry.

The three NCRC skill categories were identified by employers in research conducted by ACT, the nationally-recognized provider of education and workplace development tools, as critical to success in a majority of jobs.

Individuals earn a certificate based on the scores of these three NCRC assessments. Certificates range from bronze to platinum. The certificate levels indicate readiness for an increasing percentage of jobs—from 35% with bronze, up to 95% with platinum.

 BRONZE	Awarded for achieving a minimum Level 3 score on all assessments. Demonstrates skill level ability for 35% of jobs*
 SILVER	Awarded for achieving a minimum Level 4 score on all assessments. Demonstrates skill level ability for 65% of jobs*
 GOLD	Awarded for achieving a minimum Level 5 score on all assessments. Demonstrates skill level ability for 90% of jobs*
 PLATINUM	Awarded for achieving a minimum Level 6 score on all assessments. Demonstrates skill level ability for 95% of jobs*

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

Making the NCRC available to Oregon Employers

Oregon is joining over thirty states that are using the NCRC program. Thirteen pilot locations in Oregon have been offering the NCRC for over a year. To date, over 2,800 individuals have earned a certificate.

The valuable input of the pilot locations is supported by the guidance of public and private leaders and enhanced by experiences of early adopters such as PCC Structural, NW Natural, Medisiss and Ash Grove Cement. The NCRC is endorsed by the Oregon Business Association, Oregon Business Council, Oregon Business Plan, Associated Oregon Industries, and the Energy Consortium of Oregon & Southwest Washington. Nationally, the NCRC is endorsed by the National Association of Manufacturers.

How the NCRC Works

For employers

- ✓ The NCRC reduces hiring and training costs because it helps employers quickly identify qualified applicants.
- ✓ Individuals with an NCRC have a documented level of foundational skills, and are ready to be trained in the specific requirements of a job. Employers can easily verify a certificate's validity online.
- ✓ Employers who prefer the NCRC use it in addition to existing hiring and training practices as an objective measure of an applicant's fit for a job.

For Oregonians

- ✓ Individuals will be able to take NCRC assessments at multiple locations around the state, typically at WorkSource Oregon centers or community colleges.
- ✓ Oregonians who earn the NCRC receive a nationally recognized certificate that documents their skills.
- ✓ Certificate earners are encouraged to include their certificate level on their résumé.

**Learn how Oregon's NCRC can help you solve
your workforce and hiring needs.**

For more information, please contact Todd Nell, NCRC Program Administrator, Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, (503) 947-2406 or Todd.Nell@state.or.us