



Winning the Growth Game with Work Ready Communities

Supplemental Article for Episode 18 of the Ready for Work Podcast

Work Ready Communities (WRC) from ACT is a framework for community-based workforce development to drive economic growth. Regions improve their workforce and compete on quality for location consultants, investors, and other decision-makers using data powered by the WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate. Episode 18 of the [Ready for Work podcast](#) showcased [Site Selection Magazine's annual State of the States reports](#) and the [Regional Workforce Development Climate rankings](#).

More than 25,000 employers support NCRC nationwide. According to surveys of local WRC leaders, more than 89% use WRC to help retain and expand existing businesses, and 82% find success in business attraction and expansion. Furthering the economic development mission, NCRC yearly data is the metric for Site Selection magazine to rank state competitiveness.

Local WRCs can show prospects how to reduce risk and boost profit with skills-based hiring. Regions can pinpoint and align prospects' workforce needs with profiled tasks and integrate co-branded resources into powerful marketing and outreach. WRCs can also build solid track records in serving employer needs for retention and expansion.

Tips

Site Selection consultants offer the following tips for Work Ready Communities to maximize their certification excellence

- Availability and cost of skilled labor remains a top factor and barrier
- Explain the unique features and benefits of your Work Ready Community to investors (beyond simply claiming to have certification)
- Demonstrate partnerships of your Work Ready Community and how partnerships can help new and expanding firms
- Align your NCRC data to show how it meets specific industry demand
- Set up meetings so prospects may interview existing employers during site visit

Opportunities

Economic Development leaders across the nation open many new doors of impact linked to their Work Ready Communities efforts. Contact any member of the Work Ready Communities to learn more and get connected.

- Boost job candidate pipeline with solutions for targeted populations such as ex-offenders, immigrants, welfare recipients, etc.
- Promote WRC certification in site/building listings, community profiles, social media, etc.
- Enhance partnerships in specific sectors to link targeted training and stackable credentials
- Disaster recovery and community revitalization

The Site Selectors View

Being a site selector, I often find it difficult to compare labor force data when there is little information on how the potential workforce will perform on assessments given by companies. Not only does WorkKeys® function as a preferred assessment tool in industry today, but the ACT® Work Ready Communities website allows me to compare communities so I can recommend to my clients the counties with the best scores and the percentage of the population that are taking the assessment.

Teresa Nortillo, CEcD
Nortillo Consulting Group

As a national site selector, one of the few factors that are critical to almost every company and project is workforce. It is imperative for communities to focus on knowing and improving their existing workforce as well as retaining and attracting high quality talent. ACT Work Ready Communities are setting themselves apart by intentionally developing their local workforce in support of their existing companies while positioning themselves to attract new companies.

Robby Burgan
Manager, Location Strategies
Evergreen Advisors

Having been in site selection for many years, it has always been difficult to ensure my clients that there is available, stable and reliable workforce in a community. However, in the last few years when I see that a county is ACT Work Ready I know that they are following the steps in planning for the current and future workforce. Therefore, our tendency at FCG is to look strongly at ACT Work Ready Communities for new site locations. I would encourage all communities to seek that status.

Deane C. Foote, CEcD
President & CEO
Foote Consulting Group

Outstanding program that helps business recruit and retain qualified workers. Congrats on the milestone. As a corollary would recommend that all counties become work ready certified.

Dennis Donovan
Location Strategy and
Site Selection Advisor

ACT Work Ready is truly the best workforce development marketing tool I have seen.

Chad Chancellor
Co-Founder/CEO
The Next Move Group