



# ACT<sup>®</sup> Work Ready Communities: Common criteria

**Our nation’s skills gap isn’t going to close itself. We need real solutions—processes, data, and tools—that will link, align, and match our workforce to the needs of industry in a sustainable infrastructure for more than 3,000 counties across all 50 states.**

This solution requires a **process**—a community-based framework for workforce and economic development that certifies counties as “work ready” when established goals have been met. This process is supported by meaningful, consistent workforce skills **data**, updated monthly and drilled down to the county level across the current, emerging, and transitioning workforce. Just as important are the **tools** to drive success.

States and communities are partnering with ACT to certify counties as ACT<sup>®</sup> Work Ready Communities. The first step is establishing goals based on the proven ACT Work Ready Communities common criteria. Individuals may earn an industry-recognized skill credential—the ACT<sup>®</sup> WorkKeys<sup>®</sup> National Career Readiness Certificate<sup>®</sup> (ACT<sup>®</sup> WorkKeys<sup>®</sup> NCRC<sup>®</sup>)—and local employers agree to recognize or recommend the ACT WorkKeys NCRC in their hiring process.

**The common criteria for counties to be certified are outlined in the table to the right. County metrics are calculated by applying each criterion to population and labor force data provided by the state, region, or community.**

WORKFORCE STATUS CATEGORIES		
Workforce current status	Who comprises	County demographic data required
Current workforce	Currently employed: private or nonprofit	Total number employed private
	Currently employed: local, state, or federal government	Total number employed public
Transitioning workforce	Currently unemployed	Total number of unemployed
	Adult education participant	Total number of adult education completers
	Current or recent active duty military	
Emerging workforce	High school junior, senior, or recent graduate	Total number of high school graduates
	College student or recent graduate	Total number of community college graduates



HOW WE "SIZE UP" COMMUNITIES*	
Small counties	Up to 29,999
Medium counties	30,000–99,999
Large counties A	100,000–399,999
Large counties B	400,000–649,999
Very large counties	650,000–999,999
Mega counties	1,000,000–1,999,999

HOW WE CATEGORIZE EMPLOYERS
<b>Small employers (1-4 employees)</b> <i>Four aggregate as one employer</i>
<b>Medium employers (5-99 employees)</b> <i>Support their local county</i>
<b>Large employers (100-plus employees)</b> <i>May support counties within 25 miles</i>

\* Based on US Census population data

HOW WE CALCULATE COUNTY GOALS						
County size	Current workforce	Transitioning workforce	Emerging workforce	Employers supporting	ACT WorkKeys NCRC total actual goals cap	Employer supporting goal cap
Small counties	0.25%	15%	25%	5%	700	70
Medium counties	0.15%	12%	25%	5%	1,500	120
Large counties A	0.05%	10%	15%	2.5%	2,300	225
Large counties B	0.035%	6%	6%	1.25%	3,000	300
Very large counties	0.025%	5%	5%	1%	3,700	375
Mega counties	0.015%	3.5%	3.5%	0.65%	4,200	425

Counties should achieve goals within two years of signing up, and counties will have the opportunity to maintain their status after their initial certification. These aggressive but achievable common criteria may be supplemented in participating states by additional unique state criteria.

For more information, visit [workreadycommunities.org](http://workreadycommunities.org).