

NATIONAL CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE

Annual Report

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Higher Education Coordinating
Commission

Office of Workforce Investments

National Career Readiness
Certificate

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NATIONAL CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE

The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) is a portable, evidence-based credential that certifies the essential skills for workplace success. To-date, over 81,000 individuals across Oregon have earned an NCRC.



The NCRC verifies three foundational workplace skills:

Applied Math, Workplace Documents, and Graphic Literacy. By earning an NCRC, workers can demonstrate they have the foundational skills to be able to succeed in and grow with the companies in their communities. It helps job applicants stand out from the crowd and assures employers that applicants have the foundational skills needed to be successful on the job. Certificates are earned at four levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum.

Through the work of local staff in the WorkSource Oregon Centers, 2,962 Oregon employers have current signed letters of support indicating a preference and/or recognition of the NCRC as a valuable credential in their hiring and recruitment practices.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) is available to any Oregonian. Many high schools use the NCRC to demonstrate work readiness, earn college credit, and to meet essential skills.

All three assessments must be successfully completed to earn an NCRC. Anyone who takes all three of the NCRC assessments and does not earn a certificate will be allowed to retest any/each assessment needed in order to earn a certificate. Any individual who earns a Bronze or Silver level NCRC may retest. Once an individual has earned a Gold NCRC, publicly paid testing is no longer appropriate. Individuals who earn a Gold NCRC are welcome to earn a higher level NCRC at their own expense.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

The NCRC gives job applicants a tangible way to document work skills and stand out to an employer:

- It will make you more competitive for employment.
- It can boost your confidence in the job market.
- It is a great way to show an employer that you will go the extra mile to compete for a job.
- More and more employers are using the NCRC in their hiring process. Earning a certificate gives you access to job opportunities by employers who support the NCRC.

The NCRC helps Oregon businesses build and maintain a skilled workforce.

In today's hiring market, employers want to be able to quickly identify qualified applicants. The NCRC has proven that it reduces employee turnover. The NCRC has proven that it reduces the cost and time of training new employees.

RELATED PROGRAMS AND BENEFITS

Certified Work Ready Communities (CWRC) is an overarching workforce strategy that enables Oregon's communities to demonstrate the skilled workforce necessary for local business expansion and for companies to locate and prosper in Oregon. Ongoing support of the Oregon CWRC initiative is critical as it provides an independent endorsement of the quality of the workforce and the community's ability to meet business growth demands.



One of the key criteria for CWRC at the county level is the participation of local businesses and organizations using the NCRC. Certified Work Ready Communities empower counties and states with actionable data and specific workforce goals that drive economic growth. All 36 counties in Oregon are participating in the CWRC initiatives. Multiple counties have renewed their efforts to become a CWRC. In 2021, Tillamook and Umatilla counties have certified as Work Ready Communities. For more information, visit: <https://www.workreadycommunities.org/>

As a service to business in the state, staff from Office of Workforce Investments have been trained to provide WorkKeys Job Profiling. The profiling provides a level report for a given occupation so employers can more closely match jobs skills to job seeker skills. Job Profiling brings the specifics of a job into focus. By linking job tasks with assessments, employers can pinpoint benchmarks for hiring, recruiting, advancement, and training. A focus-group approach is used to gather input from employees to ensure customized job analysis. Employers are provided with a detailed, customized task list— which can be used in developing a comprehensive job description, training materials, performance appraisal instruments, and other human resources tools.

Many high schools in Oregon continue to use the NCRC to provide students with a work-based certificate, even though Essential Skills are not currently required for graduation.

In addition, students pursuing a postsecondary education are eligible for college credit because the ACT NCRC demonstrates college-level competency. Achieving a Platinum or Gold level is comparable to achievement in college-level coursework. The American Council on Education (ACE) validates this by recommending institutions award 3 credit hours of

quantitative analysis or introduction to organizational communication. Credit awards are at the discretion of each college or university.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

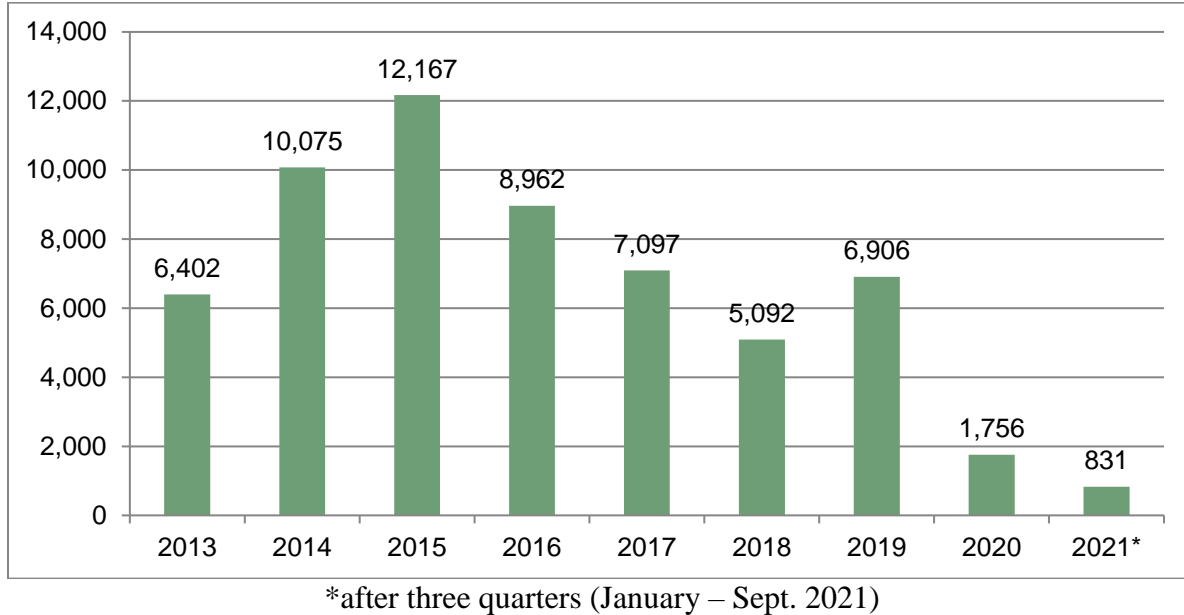
With the significant impact of the pandemic on NCRC testing, demographics have been truncated to include information required by statute and totals for the year. Additional data that has historically been included lacked relevance and is skewed by a disproportionate number of SNAP and Apprentices examinees testing.

Of the individuals who earned an NCRC during the 2020-2021 academic year, 75 were enrolled in an Oregon community college. The table below shows student completers by college:

College	Completers
Blue Mountain	DS*
Central Oregon	DS*
Chemeketa	24
Clackamas	DS*
Clatsop	DS*
Columbia Gorge	DS*
Klamath	DS*
Lane	DS*
Linn-Benton	DS*
Mount Hood	DS*
Oregon Coast	DS*
Portland	DS*
Rogue	29
Southwestern Oregon	DS*
Tillamook Bay	DS*
Treasure Valley	DS*
Umpqua	DS*
Total	75

***DS = Data Suppressed.** Due to low counts at the location, the data is suppressed to comply with HECC FERPA policy.

Oregon Data, NCRCs earned by year 2013 – 2021



EXPANDED PROGRAM IMPACT

STEP and SNAP

During FY2019, the Oregon Employment Department has a contract with the Oregon Department of Human Services to provide employment and training services to Oregonians eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in a pilot SNAP Training and Employment Program (STEP) program.

The pilot was funded through a \$300,000 grant from the Department of Human Services. Shortly after the pilot began, the HECC's Office of Workforce Investments provided an additional \$300,000 to support the pilot program. These funds were solely dedicated for SNAP support services for eligible SNAP participants.

Support service funds pay for services and materials necessary for an eligible individual to participate in qualifying activities in the SNAP program. Some of the services and materials include transportation assistance, tuition, work clothes, job interview clothes, hygiene items, birth certificates, identification, work tools, and work licenses.

Participants completed their NCRC and if needed, worked on improving their skills with guidance from local WorkSource Oregon staff.

NCRC resources have continued to support the STEP program into 2021. Before the pandemic stalled testing, the partnership saw a positive impact from the efforts to include the NCRC assessment as part of the package of services available to participants. It is recommended that this partnership continues, and ways to expand its impact are explored.

Apprenticeship Programs

The NCRC has seen an increased interest and participation among apprenticeship programs in the state. Several have included a completed NCRC certificate as a component of the application process. Some of the boards have completed the ACT Estimate process to identify the level of achievement on the NCRC to align with the curriculum for their program. Even in the remote work environment, HECC staff continue to provide this service via virtual meetings. As this continues to be a growth area, it is recommended that NCRC certificates are promoted as a component to apprenticeship program applications.

