



NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

H. Martin Lancaster, President

August 17, 2007

Response Deadline: October 5, 2007

MEMORANDUM

To: Select Community College Presidents
Select Senior Continuing Education Administrators
Select HRD Directors/Coordinators
Select Workforce Development Boards
Other Interested Parties

From: H. Martin Lancaster

Subject: New Career Readiness Certification Sites – Request for Proposals

The North Carolina Community College System Office (NCCCS) has received funding from the North Carolina Department of Commerce - Commission on Workforce Development to establish 5 additional sites to implement a portable credential called the Career Readiness Certificate. The Career Readiness Certificate is an employability credential that reflects an individual's attainment of certain core employability skills required across many industries and occupations.

North Carolina's multi-level approach to career readiness credentialing allows the individual to improve skill levels over time through work experience or additional training, which may be industry or occupation specific. The Career Readiness Certificate is one component of an emerging statewide system of portable skills credentials that integrate and promote the attainment of academic, employability, and industry/occupation specific skills for individuals in order to qualify for current and anticipated jobs in the state. Currently, there are 31 states piloting a similar credential with more states being added monthly.

Attached you will find a three-page abstract for Career Readiness Certification and the guidelines for submitting a proposal for becoming a site. **The proposals are due to the System Office on October 5.** Please note **on September 4, 2007**, there will be a grant writing technical assistance meeting at the Workforce Development Training Center (see attached). If you have further questions, contact Pamela Gobel at (919) 807-7215 or Stephanie Deese at (919) 807-7159.

Attachments

c: Willa Dickens
Stephanie Deese
Pamela Gobel
Barbara Boyce

S07-034
E-Mail

MAILING ADDRESS: 5001 MAIL SERVICE CENTER ~ RALEIGH, NC 27699-5001

Street Address: 200 West Jones Street ~ Raleigh, NC 27603-1379 ~ 919-807-7100 ~ Fax 919-807-7164

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

North Carolina Career Readiness Certification

Technical Assistance Meeting
Tuesday, September 4, 2007
1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
Workforce Development Training Center
313 Chapanoke Rd, Suite 140
Raleigh, NC 27603

Agenda

1:00	Welcome	Stephanie Deese and Pamela Gobel, NCCCS
1:15	CRC Proposal Review	Pam Gobel
2:00	WIN Presentation & Questions	Diane Lindsey, Regional Sales Director WorldWide Interactive Network
2:30	KeyTrain Presentation & Questions	Les Harrison Thinking Media
3:00	RFP Question & Answer	Pamela Gobel
4:00	Adjourn	Thanks for coming!

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING CENTER
313 CHAPANOKE RD
SUITE 140
RALEIGH, NC 27603
919 329-5588**

DIRECTIONS

WEST OF RALEIGH

- Take I-40 East toward Raleigh
- Exit 299 Hammond Rd.
- Turn right onto Hammond Rd.
- At second stoplight turn right onto Chapanoke Rd
- Building is on left .2 mile.

NORTH OF RALEIGH:

- Take US-1 BYP S, which becomes US-1 S
- Stay straight to go onto Capital BLVD/US-401 S
- Merge onto I-440 E toward Rocky Mount
- Take Exit 299 Hammond Rd
- Turn left onto Hammond
- Turn right onto Chapanoke Rd
- Building is on left .2 mile

SOUTH OF RALEIGH:

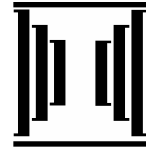
- Take I-95 N
- Merge onto I-40 W via exit 81 toward Raleigh
- Take Exit 299 Hammond Rd
- Turn left onto Hammond
- Turn right onto Chapanoke Rd
- Building is on left .2 mile

EAST OF RALEIGH:

- Take I-40 West toward Raleigh
- Take Exit 299 Hammond Rd
- Turn left onto Hammond
- Turn right onto Chapanoke Rd
- Building is on left .2 mile

*****SUITE 140 FACES
CHAPANOKE RD.*****

Go to www.ncwdtc.com to view map



North Carolina

Career Readiness Certification

A Service of the NC Community College System and the JobLink Career Centers

Request for Proposal CRC Abstract

Overview

In North Carolina, the Career Readiness Certification initiative is being driven by a partnership between the community colleges, the Workforce Development Boards, and the JobLink Career Centers. A statewide team comprised of representatives from Workforce Development Partner agencies has guided the development of the policies and procedures for the CRC implementation.

The North Carolina Community College System Office (NCCCS) has received funding from the North Carolina Department of Commerce - Commission on Workforce Development to establish additional sites to implement a portable credential called Career Readiness Certification (CRC). The Career Readiness Certificate is an employability credential that reflects an individual's attainment of certain core employability skills required across many industries and occupations. North Carolina's multi-level approach to career readiness credentialing allows the individual to improve skill levels over time through work experience or additional training, which may be industry or occupation specific. The Career Readiness Certificate is one component of an emerging statewide system of portable skills credentials that integrates and promotes the attainment of academic, employability and industry/occupation specific skills by individuals in order to qualify for current and anticipated jobs in the state.

Currently, there are 31 states piloting a similar credential with more states being added monthly (see attachment). North Carolina has joined a consortium of states to solicit their feedback and expertise as we develop our statewide rollout of this credential. CRC is based on the ACT *WorkKeys®* assessment tool. ACT (formerly known as American College Testing) is nationally recognized as a leader in standardized testing.

The North Carolina Community College System will provide system oversight of the Career Readiness Certification (CRC) Initiative. The NCCCS is seeking an additional 5 community colleges to continue the statewide roll-out of the Career Readiness Certification (CRC) initiative. Below is a brief overview of the background of the CRC and the guidelines for submitting a proposal.

Background

North Carolina recognizes the need to assess an individual's skill levels and identify any gaps in workplace skill requirements that will guide training decisions. To address these issues, North Carolina is developing and implementing a Career Readiness Certification process.

Employers know that the costs of hiring, training, and retaining workers significantly affect the bottom line of profitability. The cost of making a good hire is high; the cost of making a bad hire is even greater!

In the private sector, there is great concern about the gap that exists between those skills required on the job and those exhibited by potential and incumbent workers. Employers experience significant challenges identifying potential applicants who have basic workplace skills and are therefore trainable for specific jobs.

A portable skills credential that is easily and universally understood and valued by employers, educators and recipients would facilitate job placement, retention and advancement in our mobile society. A credential that describes specific skill levels of the holder would be a valuable complement to a high school diploma, GED or

college degree, as well as a great stand-alone credential. Additionally, it would be an especially useful economic development tool in regions where employment-related skill levels of the potential workforce are perceived to be an inhibitor to business development.

Career Readiness Certificate Overview

North Carolina's Career Readiness Certificate identifies core workplace skill levels required across multiple industries and occupations. The Career Readiness Certificate is a portable credential that promotes career development and skill attainment for the individual and confirms to employers that an individual possesses basic workplace skills in reading, applied math, and locating information – skills that most jobs require. As individuals earn the Career Readiness Certificate, the information is entered into the CRC database available on the website (www.crcnc.org). The database is searchable by geographic criteria as well as by skill levels and time periods. The database is updated immediately as individuals are entered.

CRC is not a stand-alone program. Instead, CRC is a credentialing process that is integrated into existing programs and services. The goal of the process is to create a coordinated assessment system that addresses workplace skill requirements and guides education and training needs through a continuum of skill levels while providing a vehicle to showcase the skilled workforce of North Carolina. Below is a brief overview of the system qualities and characteristics of CRC.

Service Strategy	Promotional Branding	Added Value-Relevance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presents a clearly defined pathway for all users ▪ Process begins with assessment and counseling ▪ Provides multiple pathways to success ▪ All pathways lead to skill enhancement and/or employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer-valued; responsive and results-driven ▪ Employer-valued, utilized and recognized ▪ Interagency in nature and highly coordinated and integrated into existing programs, initiatives and services ▪ Agency partners agree to accept valid and reliable results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Validate basic skill level attainment and workplace readiness ▪ Enable employers to quickly assess and recognize the skill level of workers for a wide range of jobs ▪ Provide a way for students and workers to document and advance their employability skills ▪ Inform educators how to best tailor instructional programs to help students acquire the specific skills that employers need

Partnering for Career Readiness Certification in North Carolina

Partners in the local and state development of the CRC are the community colleges, the Workforce Development Boards and the JobLink Career Center partner agencies. A statewide data collection system has been developed with guidance from the pilot sites. Lessons learned during the pilot phase are being disseminated to all partners for a statewide rollout strategy.

A Multi-Level Approach: Bronze, Silver and Gold Level Certificates

North Carolina's Career Readiness Certificate has three levels: *Bronze*, *Silver* and *Gold*. The three levels allow an individual to advance his or her reading, applied math, and locating information skill levels in order to qualify for more jobs.

- *Bronze Level* – An individual achieving this level of certification possesses core workplace skills for approximately 30% of the jobs profiled by *WorkKeys®* in these skill areas.
- *Silver Level* - An individual achieving this level of certification possesses core employability skills for approximately 65% of the jobs profiled by *WorkKeys®* in these skill areas.
- *Gold Level* - An individual achieving this level of certification possesses core employability skills for approximately 90% of the jobs profiled by *WorkKeys®* in these skill areas.

Assessment Used to Certify Career Readiness

The standardized assessment used in the Career Readiness Certification system is *WorkKeys®*, a product of ACT. *WorkKeys®* is a comprehensive employability skill assessment tool designed to help employees and individuals develop better workplace skills. Thousands of companies in the United States and internationally use *WorkKeys®* skill assessments, job profiles, training evaluations, and research and reporting services to assess skill needs and measure progress. Over the last 10 years, *WorkKeys®* has become a widely accepted common language for skills definition among employers, educators/trainers and potential/incumbent employees. The power of the *WorkKeys®* system lies in its 1) objectivity; 2) simplicity (*WorkKeys®* skill levels are described in terms of single digit numbers whose meanings are clearly defined and readily accessible); 3) compliance with federal law (ADA, EEOC); and 4) legal defensibility based on validity and reliability studies.

Obtaining the North Carolina Career Readiness Certificate

To earn a Career Readiness Certificate, a customer must take the three WorkKeys assessments, which will be administered by community college staff or the JobLink designee specified in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The three assessments used are Reading for Information, Applied Math, and Locating Information.

As a result of the testing, individuals will either earn a Career Readiness Certificate for a specified skill level and/or be provided with documentation that identifies areas in which they need further training to obtain a certificate. Training is available to build skills to qualify the individual for the CRC or to upgrade the level of the CRC. JobLink Career Centers will partner with post-secondary education to ensure that training and education opportunities are available to meet targeted training needs based on the *WorkKeys®* assessment. Each site will be required to use either WIN and/or KeyTrain as a training intervention strategy. (These programs were selected because they are approved ACT partner programs. See attached flyer for a description of these training programs).

Management Practices

Each site will designate a staff member as the CRC administrator. This person, in partnership with the WDB, JobLink Career Center operators/managers and program partners will be responsible for developing a local integrated service delivery process for issuing the CRC. Each site selected will be required to develop a Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the CRC. This agreement must be submitted to NCCCS by April 1, 2008. At a minimum, the MOU should include: 1) the specific services to be provided, 2) the fees associated with said services, and 3) specific roles and responsibilities of each party to the agreement. MOU's must include the local arrangements for administering the CRC *WorkKeys®* assessments. A standard statewide fee schedule has been developed and must be approved by your local Community College Board of Trustees (see attached).

WorkKeys® assessments will be administered locally at locations that meet ACT testing administration guidelines. Sites will work with the CRC state team to establish further guidelines for test administration. Community Colleges and/or JobLink designees will administer paper and pencil or computer-based *WorkKeys®* assessments. Community colleges will distribute the CRC and perform CRC data collection functions.

There will be an age requirement for eligibility for CRC. Individuals must be 18 years of age or have a high school diploma or its equivalent. Colleges that intend to issue certifications to individuals under 18 must submit a justification.

Local Workforce Development Boards will be asked to develop local policies that authorize the use of WIA funds for CRC attainment. For customers who are WIA participants, the local WDB may require a certain percentage of WIA funds be used for CRC assessment and related gap training. In addition, for WIA participants, the local WDB may set a local system performance measure for "career readiness" using CRC attainment as the benchmark.

Career Readiness Certification

Request for Proposals - Guidelines

The North Carolina Community College System Office (NCCCS) is seeking five community colleges to serve as additional sites to implement a process that meets the goals and objectives set forth in the statewide roll-out of the Career Readiness Certification (CRC) project. Guidelines for submitting a proposal are listed below:

1. Colleges must complete the attached "Request for Proposal" questionnaire.
2. Colleges must complete the attached *General Assurances and Certifications* signatory page with all required official signatures. (Proposals without official signatures will not be considered)
3. Proposal should be typed using a font no smaller than 12 pt.
4. The first two pages of the proposal should be the attached cover page and the *General Assurances and Certifications* signatory page, respectively.
5. Submit an original and four copies of your proposal to:

Pamela Gobel, Director
 Career Readiness Certification
 North Carolina Community College System

Physical Address

200 West Jones Street
 Raleigh, NC 27603

Mailing Address

5003 Mail Service Center
 Raleigh, NC 27699-5003

6. Deadline for submission of proposal is October 5, 2007, by 5:00 p.m. (faxes and e-mails will not be accepted)
7. A panel of 4-8 members will review proposals.
8. For questions, please contact Pam Gobel at gobelp@ncccommunitycolleges.edu, or 919-807-7215, or Stephanie Deese at deeses@ncccommunitycolleges.edu, or 919-807-7159.

The total allocation to each site is \$28,000. *Please note that the NCCCS has purchased site licenses and testing materials for WorkKeys.*

Time Line

August 17, 2007	Send out the Request for Proposals.
September 4, 2007	Conduct grant writing technical assistance meeting.
October 5, 2007	Proposals must be submitted by 5:00 PM to the NCCCS.
October 15 - 31	4-8 members from the CRC State Committee review Proposals.
November 16, 2007	Names of sites will be submitted to NCCCS State Board for approval.
November 17, 2007	Award letters will be sent to selected sites.
January 9, 2008	Mandatory meeting & training for awarded sites.
April 1, 2008	Local Memorandums of Understanding are due to NCCCS.

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Below are the instructions for completing this questionnaire. Be certain that all sections are included with narrative specific to the questions/statements listed under each heading. Funding under this RFP is for a one-year period and provides for planning and implementing the initial set-up for the Career Readiness Certification system. Therefore, proposed activities and budget requests should support this time duration. A 4-8-member panel will review proposals. Total points awarded for each section are listed in parenthesis beside each section heading.

I. **Abstract** (5 points)

This section is limited to one single-spaced page.

Provide a summary of your proposal. Narrative should include a needs statement, services to be provided, identification of collaborative partners and any other pertinent facts.

II. **Body of the Proposal**

The content of this section, along with the other parts of the proposal, give evidence that the applicant has the capability to carry out the activities proposed in the CRC Project.

A. **Needs Statement** (15 points)

This section is limited to one double-spaced page.

From a local perspective, explain the need for the project, the rationale upon which the proposal is based, and the issues related to creating a coordinated assessment system that addresses workplace skill requirements and guides education and training needs through a continuum of skills levels. Include any data to document the need.

B. **Program Design** (80 points)

This section is limited to ten double-spaced pages.

1. **Industry/Agency/Customer Support**

The Career Readiness Certification (CRC) system must be supported and valued by employers, partner agencies, and customers.

- a. Describe your strategies for securing support from these groups.
- b. Indicate how you will involve your local JobLink Career Center in the development, implementation, and operation of your local CRC system.
- c. Indicate how you will involve your local Workforce Development Board (WBD) in the development and design of your local CRC system.
- d. If available, please attach any letters of support/commitment from industry and/or partner agencies.

2. **WorkKeys® Deployment**

WorkKeys® will be the assessment tool used as the basis for awarding the CRC. Each college must show evidence that they have the capacity to administer the assessment.

- a. Describe your capacity to administer the *WorkKeys®* Assessment. Include a description of the testing facility, staffing, test security and capacity of computer equipment.

- b. List the JobLink Career Centers that are partnering with you. Identify how assessments will be administered at the JobLink Career Centers. Include a description of the testing facility, staffing, test security and capacity of computer equipment.
3. Skill Enhancement Training
The primary training associated with CRC will be designed to fill the gaps in one's skills as indicated by the CRC *WorkKeys®* assessment scores (i.e. training needed to obtain a Bronze, Silver or Gold CRC).
 - a. Describe your strategies for working with customers to identify skill gaps and develop a training program.
 - b. Identify the curricula to be used for training intervention-- KeyTrain or WIN. Describe how you will provide training intervention services and where these tools will be made available.
4. Service Delivery
Local programs will be able to customize their CRC proposal to fit local labor needs. There should be various pathways with multiple entry and exit points available to the individual. The design should clearly define partner roles and services.
 - a. Present a diagram that outlines your service delivery strategies.
 - b. Identify the Test Administrator(s). Include the program area and/or position title.
 - c. Identify your partner agencies. Describe the role of each partner. Narrative should include a list of partners and the scope/extent of the partnerships.
 - d. Describe how you will make the CRC process accessible through various program services and/or testing locations as designated by the community colleges, including the local JobLink Career Center.
 - e. Describe your efforts to coordinate CRC with other workforce initiatives at your college or other partner programs/agencies. Any letters of support for the project should be attached as an appendix.
5. Management Practices
Through local agreements with their WDB and JobLink operators/manager, local community colleges will be responsible for designing and approving local processes and procedures to administer and score the CRC *WorkKeys®* assessments, enter CRC participant data, print (and reprint) CRC's and provide the CRC to the participant.
 - a. Describe your planning process for developing an MOU. If you have preliminary agreements in place, please include them in this response.
 - b. At a minimum, the MOU should include: 1) the specific services to be provided 2) the fees associated with said services, and 3) the specific roles and responsibilities of each party to the agreement. Please note that *WorkKeys®* assessments must be administered at locations that meet ACT testing administration guidelines.
6. Marketing/Communication Strategy
Marketing the CRC needs to include both top-down and bottom-up communication and education strategies. The CRC needs to be presented as meeting the core employability skills needs of business and industry, as identified by employers. It is essential to include *WorkKeys®* seminars for your business community as part of the marketing and outreach efforts.
 - a. Describe your marketing/communication strategy that includes identification of target audiences and events, determination of appropriate communication media, and the creation of supporting materials.
 - b. If available, please include any print materials that you have already developed.

7. Management Plan

- a. Describe the role of staff that will be assigned to this project. What percentage of their time will be committed to this project?
- b. Provide a timetable that outlines major activities, benchmarks and completion dates.

8. Work Habits/Employability Instruction

During the career readiness certification process, you may encounter customers who would benefit from training on a variety of work preparation topics such as work ethics, communication skills, and job retention strategies. This training is usually delivered through the Human Resources Development (HRD) program at community colleges.

- a. For those customers who need this type of instruction, describe how you will incorporate HRD training into your CRC system.
- b. Include course outlines for your work habits/employability skills training.

9. Budget (10 Points)

This is a one-year grant. Funding should be used for the initial set-up and implementation. Each site will receive \$28,000. Allowable expenses include staff salaries/fringes, travel, instructional training, instructional materials, WorkKeys Profiler training, software licenses, assessment materials, printing, general supplies, and marketing materials.

Please note: NCCCS has already negotiated an agreement with ACT to purchase required software licenses for all community colleges.

- a. Complete the attached budget worksheet.
- b. Provide a budget narrative of expenses.

Bonus: Up to 10 additional points will be given to proposals that show evidence that their college and /or workforce development board is committing additional resources (cash or in-kind) to CRC in an effort to expand and/or sustain the project once the grant has ended.

Career Readiness Certificate Statewide Implementation - Budget

Each site will receive \$28,000.

Programmatic		<u>Budget</u>
A.	Salary – Non Instructional	
B.	Salary – Instructional	
C.	Fringe – FICA	
D.	Fringe - State Retirement	
E.	Fringe – Medical	
F.	Travel - Transportation, Meals, and Lodging	
G.	Travel – Registration	
H.	Instructional Supplies and Materials	
I.	General Supplies	
J.	Printing	
K.	Marketing Materials	
L.	Software Licenses (WIN and/or KeyTrain)	
M.	Computer-based Testing site license for JobLinks- \$100.00 per site	
N.	<i>WorkKeys®</i> assessments (average of \$12.00 for the 3 tests)***	
Total Requested:		\$28,000.

*** Each college may request individual CRC assessments as a part of the state grant award. Any additional assessments must be reflected in the budget.

Career Readiness Certification Program

Request for Proposals – Cover Page

COLLEGE INFORMATION

- A. Name of College: _____
- B. Name of College Contact Person: _____
- C. Mailing Address: _____
- D. Telephone: _____
- E. Fax: _____
- F. E-mail Address: _____

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD INFORMATION

- A. Name of WDB: _____
- B. Name of WDB Contact Person: _____
- C. Mailing Address: _____
- D. Telephone: _____
- E. Fax: _____
- F. E-mail Address: _____

JOBLINK CAREER CENTER INFORMATION

- A. Name of JobLink(s): _____
- B. Name of JobLink Contact Person(s): _____
- C. Mailing Address(es): _____
- D. Telephone number(s): _____
- E. Fax number(s): _____
- F. E-mail Address(es): _____

GENERAL ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Signature Page

The partners listed below agree to form a partnership for the purposes of promoting and supporting the local Career Readiness Certification system.

_____ (WBD)

_____ (College)

_____ (JobLink)

These partners also agree to develop a Memorandum of Understanding for the local administration of the CRC and to submit the MOU to NCCCS by April 1, 2008. Each of the partners agrees to work collaboratively in the development of an MOU which addresses the following:

- Provision of adequate staffing to carry out the duties and responsibilities of this Career Readiness Certification project.
- Sending local CRC staff to required training sessions scheduled for pilot sites.
- Participation in conference calls/attend periodic meetings.
- Submission of quarterly progress reports.
- Making presentations at various meetings/conferences on topics related to the project.
- Abiding by the CRC Guidelines for Implementation that will be established at the state level.
- Using the tools developed at the state level for the project.
- Maintenance of records on the tests administered under the CRC.
- Complying with the requirements of the State Level CRC Team.

Signatures

Date

Community College President		
College Project Contact Person		

WDB Chair		
WDB Director		
WDB Project Contact Person		

JobLink Career Center Manager:		
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Major Initiative in Many States

CRC Consortium States

June 2007

CRC deployed	CRC in Progress or Issued Locally	Interested in CRC:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kentucky • Indiana • Virginia • Louisiana • Missouri • North Carolina • Oklahoma • Alabama • Tennessee • New Mexico • Florida • Georgia • South Carolina • Arkansas <p>14 states</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Dakota • Wyoming • West Virginia • Iowa • Nevada • Washington • Kansas • Ohio • Colorado • Arizona • Massachusetts • Pennsylvania • Texas • Michigan • New York • Oregon • Mississippi <p>17 states</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California • Delaware • Maryland • Rhode Island • Illinois • Montana • Minnesota • Idaho • Alaska • Nebraska • Vermont • Utah • New Jersey • District of Columbia <p>14 states</p>



North Carolina
Career Readiness Certification

Fee Structure

Name of College _____

As a partner in the implementation of Career Readiness Certification (CRC) initiative, we agree with the following fee structure for the issuance of the Career Readiness Certifications.

	Service	Fee Structure
1.	WorkKeys® Assessment – Individual	
	– Reading for Information	\$10.00
	– Applied Math	\$10.00
	– Locating Information	\$10.00
2.	WorkKeys® Assessment – Package	
	– Includes the 3 CRC tests and certificate	\$30.00
3.	Certificate (reprinting, duplicate or upgrade original certification)	\$5.00

Signatures:

_____	_____
Community College Contact	Date
_____	_____
JobLink Career Center Director	Date
_____	_____
Workforce Development Board	Date