

## **Narrative 2: National Career Readiness Certificate Attainment**

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Present a plan to raise the National Career Readiness Certificate rate to 15 percent of working age (18-64) adults within three years. Plan should include promotional strategies, training availability, and encouraging employer recognition of the certificate.

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### **Overview**

As of August 28, 2013, NCRC testing centers have administered numerous exams to Webster County residents. Of those tested successfully (554), there was 1 platinum, 122 gold, and 314 silver certificates awarded. Forty-one individuals scored at the bronze level. In addition, there are approximately 132 individuals (high school seniors as of August 2013) scheduled for testing before December 31, 2013. According to the National Career Readiness Certificate Attainment Criteria for Webster County of 9% of all working age (18 to 64) adults, 754 NCRC credentials are needed to reach the Work Ready Community goal. This means that Webster County will need to obtain approximately 200 NCRC's within the next 3 years to attain the required NCRC percentage. If 70% of the 2013 high school seniors pass the test, the number will go up to 646 this year. With job seekers and high school seniors continuing to test over the next three years, the number will be well over the 9% goal.

With a coal severance multi-county grant of \$250,000 for NCRC, the testing for Webster County job applicants and seniors will be free. Right now the account balance for the three counties; Webster, Muhlenberg and Hopkins is \$202,048.83. With free tests, Webster County will exceed the goal of 9% in three years (this includes job seekers and high school seniors). GRADD and Northwest Forward are working with the counties of Webster, Henderson, Union and McLean promoting Work Ready and NCRC in all their counties through economic development efforts as well as local work ready committees.

Northwest Kentucky Forward works with the regional schools, in conjunction with Henderson Community College and Madisonville Community College, to encourage students to use the tests and NCRC as their standardized test. The schools are very interested in pursuing this route, especially with the support of the college and local employers. NWKF staff present seminars to juniors and seniors annually on Regional Workplace Opportunities. The value of the NCRC and credentialing is part of these seminars. By increasing the number of high school graduates annually with the certification, this will increase the county's rate over the next three years. For employers, Northwest Kentucky Forward's award winning existing business program promotes, through both individual and group meetings, the value of NCRC in the hiring and promotion process.

The cities of Dixon and Providence publically endorsed Work Ready and NCRC. Also, the Area Technology Center, Office of Employment, and Adult Education have committed to Work Ready and NCRC. The Community Improvement Committee working on NCRC has asked for letters of support from numerous businesses and industries within Webster County.

Madisonville Community College has sponsored a Multi-County Coal Severance Tax Grant for WorkKeys testing of all trainees for the 40 hour Initial Underground and 24 hour Initial Surface Certification classes. Applicants from Hopkins County, Muhlenberg County, Ohio County, and

Webster County are given the opportunity to attend classes, complete the training, and sit for the required Kentucky State Mining Certification test at no charge. Each month, eight (8) different classes with multiple times and locations in each of the four counties are offered to meet the area training need. Upon completion of each class training with certification, the Workforce Solutions Department has administered WorkKeys Assessments for nine different profiled mining jobs. As of May 31, 2013, MCC has tested **3,335 trainees (150 Webster County)** for the three WorkKeys assigned assessments of **Reading for Information, Teamwork, and Observation**. Because only one of these assessments qualifies for the NCRC, (**Reading for Information**), we are unable to count this effort for the NCRC Attainment requirement criteria. Although the WorkKeys addresses specific jobs, the numbers are not currently recognized by WIA. Because these specific job qualifications were profiled and now assessed according to the WorkKeys profile recommendations, a strong commitment is demonstrated to the local workforce and industries for meeting industry specific workforce skills assessment needs.

Outlined below are the **strategies to promote, train, and obtain** employer recognition of the NCRC program in order for Webster County to reach the necessary number to meet the NCRC attainment.

### NCRC Promotional Strategies

Throughout this year, the majority of the 554 NCRC's awarded in Webster County have come through the Madisonville Community College Assessment Center. A total of 295 were listed at different locations. The Henderson Community College Assessment Center tested 126 people- 64 were Workforce Solutions clients that took WorkKeys for employment purposes. Each of these organizations supports promotional materials through brochures, posters, site visits, and student recruitment. Webster County adopted the Madisonville Community College Workforce Solutions brochure in partnership with the Office of Employment and Training. The NCRC brochure outlines and describes the NCRC, weekly testing times, and four different testing locations in Madisonville. Henderson Community College offers NCRC testing times 2-4 times monthly.

The NCRC Work Ready Community team across four counties including Webster promoted the NCRC program at the Job Expo 2013 event hosted at Madisonville Community College in partnership with the West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board, Office of Employment and Training, and over 80 area businesses and organizations. There were approximately 300 participants in attendance; all received information about the NCRC program with a signup opportunity to test on specific dates. Participating Job Expo employers were also provided NCRC promotional material listing testing dates and locations. The Job Fair will be an annual NCRC promotion event.

Job Expo 2013 participating employers were:

<i>A Place Called Home</i>	<i>Hudson Automotive</i>
<i>AFLAC</i>	<i>Jennmar of West Kentucky</i>
<i>Alliance Coal</i>	<i>Jos Staffing</i>
<i>Allied Medical Services</i>	<i>Ken American Resources</i>
<i>Armstrong Coal</i>	<i>Land O'Frost</i>
<i>Avon Products</i>	<i>Madisonville Fire Department</i>
<i>Bluegrass Heritage Marketing</i>	<i>Manpower</i>
<i>Brighton Cornerstone Healthcare</i>	<i>Mid-Continent University</i>
<i>Bulkmatic Transport</i>	<i>MSU Small Business Development</i>
<i>Carhartt Distribution Center</i>	<i>New Wave Communications</i>
<i>Columbia Sportswear</i>	<i>Outwood-Rescare</i>
<i>Commonwealth Broadcasting</i>	<i>Patriot Coal</i>
<i>Community Alternatives</i>	<i>Pennyroyal Hospice</i>
<i>Concord Health Systems</i>	<i>Pogue Automotive Group</i>
<i>Custom Engineering</i>	<i>Staff Partners</i>
<i>Daydreams Academy</i>	<i>Sunrise Children's Services</i>
<i>Earle C. Clements Job Corps</i>	<i>Trover Health System</i>
<i>G UB MK Constructors</i>	<i>United Way of the Coalfield</i>
<i>Hampton Inn &amp; Suites</i>	<i>U.S. Army Recruiting</i>
<i>Hillside Villa</i>	<i>Webstaurantstore.com</i>
<i>Hopkins County Head Start</i>	<i>WFMW-WKTG</i>

**Future**

The high school seniors will be tested each year and companies across the region will continue to participate. Century Aluminum, a major employer in Webster County residents, requires the NCRC. The distribution of the NCRC promotional materials will be continued across the county and the committee will continue to encourage businesses to commit.