

Narrative 2: National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) Attainment: Present a plan to raise the National Career Readiness Certificate rate to nine percent of working age (18-64) adults within three years and 15 percent within five years. Plan should include promotional strategies, training availability and encouraging employer recognition of the certificate.

Overview

The NCRC is a positive investment in Kentucky's and Rowan County's workforce. The current recorded number of NCRC holders as of January 2013 in Rowan County is 370 people or just over 2% of the total civilian work of 15,911. Increasing the number of NCRC holders in Rowan County is critical in providing the workforce that meets the needs of current and future employers in our area. With this in mind, the Rowan County Work Ready Community Steering Committee is committed to raising the percentage of NCRC in Rowan County to nine percent of the civilian labor force by 2017 and 15 percent by 2019. This would mean increasing the number of working age adults to 1,432 by 2017 and 2,387 by 2019.

To make this happen the Steering Committee will leverage all state and local agencies to provide resources and to market the NCRC as a resource for the community and our employers throughout the region. Spearheading this initiative is a NCRC sub-committee consisting of representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, Office of Employment and Training, KCTCS, Morehead State University Office of Adult Education, Rowan County Board of Education, Morehead – Rowan County Economic Development Council and human resource directors from local employers.

Creating Demand

The most important effort needed to increase the number of NCRC holders in Rowan County is to increase the demand for these people from companies in the County and throughout the region. Currently only one company, Emerson Industrial Automation, in Rowan County considers the NCRC in their hiring decision process. Other companies in the region using the NCRC include: Mitsubishi in Mason County; Clopay in Bracken County; and KDMK, Cooper Standard and A.O. Smith in Montgomery County.

The Morehead – Rowan County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council stand ready to work with our partners at KCTCS, Office of Employment and Training, Gateway Area Development District, TENCO Workforce Investment Board and others to create demand from our employers for NCRC holders.

This effort will be spearheaded by the Morehead – Rowan County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council Directors. Through monthly Chamber Luncheons and regular plant and human resource manager meetings we will work to educate area industries about the

NCRC and its significance. A presentation about the NCRC was given at the May Chamber of Commerce Luncheon for area of businesses and reported upon in the *Morehead News*. (Appendix E)

Available Resources

All state and local agencies involved with our current and future civilian labor force must be involved in this initiative. This includes funding, facilities and supplies. Rowan County has the infrastructure to support this mission including the Office of Employment and Training, Maysville Community and Technical College – Rowan Campus, Morehead State University's Office of Adult Education and the Rowan County Board of Education.

Employer Pilot Projects – The Morehead - Rowan County EDC in partnership with the Office of Employment and Training is proposing two NCRC pilot projects with two of the county's larger employers. St. Claire Regional Medical Center has already identified two positions that they want to give preference to those who have taken the NCRC. Jennifer Campbell at St. Claire has identified two current employees to take the NCRC before the end of May to act as benchmarks for future hires.

The Morehead – Rowan County EDC has applied for an ARC Flex-E-Grant (See Appendix H) to provide up to \$1,250 to fund the testing of 20 current employees to set benchmarks and up to 30 new hires at SRG Global. The company is the largest manufacturing employers in Rowan County. This incentive will enable the company to start using the NCRC at no cost to them so they can see first-hand the advantages it can provide in making hiring decisions.

KCTCS Support – The MCTC – Rowan Campus reaches out to businesses throughout our region taking advantage of KY-WINS where possible to help fund the NCRC testing for employers. Through their initiatives, MCTC has administered the NCRC to about 300 employees over the past four years throughout the region.

OET Support – The Morehead Office of Employment and Training administers about 20 NCRC tests monthly supporting job seekers at companies throughout our region including Emerson Industrial Automation in Rowan County and others. Another driver of NCRC testing through OET is the additional scholarships available to the disabled, veterans and long-term unemployed. Between this and more businesses in our region recognizing the NCRC in their hiring process the NCRC Subcommittee will work to provide additional resources to support testing more applicants. It is planned to increase the capacity to an average of 30 employees per month.

MSU Adult Education Support – The MSU Adult Education staff graduates 80 GED students annually. The Adult Education staff encourages these students to work towards another credential to better the job opportunities. The NCRC credential fits the needs of these students.

Currently Adult Education has seen 18 students received this credential for far this fiscal year and they plan to reach 36 by the end of June. As more demand for the NCRC is created the number of NCRC credentials awarded is planned to increase to 38 next year.

Rowan County Board of Education Support – An important partnership was formed between the Morehead – Rowan County Economic Development Council, TENCO WIB, Rowan County Board of Education and area businesses during Fiscal Year 2012 - 13. The NCRC is an important measurement for High Schools in demonstrating their graduates' work readiness. Because of limited funding Rowan County High School would not be able to afford testing this year. The Morehead – Rowan County Economic Development Director created a partnership between the EDC, TENCO WIB, SRG Global and Heiner's Distribution to raise \$4,500 for Rowan County High School to administer the NCRC to all seniors. These funds also allowed for the school to offer some remediation training and retesting. Of the first 156 students tested 120 (76.9%) scored at a silver level or above. This level of success compares well with other school systems that have used the NCRC as an evaluation tool. Most importantly, however, the Rowan County High School is committed to using the test year after year regardless of funding. Rowan County High School teachers and staff continue to study how to make the most out of the test.

Goals

With the support of employers throughout the region, the partners will work to test 45 employees a month on average starting in 2014. To track the progress of creating a work ready labor force, the NCRC sub-committee has developed the following timeline to serve as benchmarks and yearly goals in a three and five-year plan to increase the number of NCRC holder to nine percent and 15% respectively:

- Dec. 2013: 601
- Dec. 2014: 1,141
- Dec. 2015: 1,681
- Dec. 2016: 2,221
- Dec. 2017: 2,761

The Rowan County Work Ready Steering Committee has developed this plan to change the mindset of employees and employers to recognize the need for a credential demonstrating the basic skills and trainability of the individual. To meet the added demand for testing, The EDC Director has been working with OET staff to provide testing at employer sites and providing testing opportunities during alternate office hours to provide group testing for up to 20 people. As demand continues to grow, we have identified possible alternate testing sites at the high school, MSU and conference center.

Narrative 4: Present a plan to raise the current Educational Attainment rate of individuals residing in Rowan County, Kentucky from 25.9% (Appendix F) of working-aged (18 – 64) adults to 32% within three years and to 39% within five years.

Based on calculations from the 2007 - 2011 American Community Survey estimate from the U.S. Census Bureau, Rowan County has a 29.8% rate of adults over 25 who hold at least an associate degree.

Associate Degree =	5.6%
Bachelor Degree =	11.8%
<u>Master Degree =</u>	<u>12.4%</u>
Total	= 29.8%

Rowan County, Kentucky is fortunate to have two institutions of higher education within its boundaries; a Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) community college campus, the Rowan Campus of Maysville Community and Technical College (RC-MCTC) and a four-year public institution, Morehead State University (MSU). Both of these nationally recognized institutions of higher education share the primary goal of providing a superior level of education to equip highly trained students who are ready for employment.

Postsecondary Educational Institutions

The **Rowan Campus** (RC-MCTC) offers a variety of services and programs to help students successfully achieve their academic and career goals and successfully graduate with an associate degree, or transfer to a four year institution such as MSU. Students will often return to the Rowan Campus after completing a certificate or diploma in a technical, business, or industrial academic program to complete an associate degree. Many of the students that complete a certificate or diploma are able to work in a high wage high demand career within our service region, and then continue their education at the Rowan Campus or transfer to a four year institution. The economic development and workforce development organizations in Rowan County place high emphasis on certificate and diploma programs as a proven method of not only increasing educational attainment, but as an effective way to increase per-capita income while meeting the immediate needs of employers throughout the region. See Appendix F for more information about the recent growth of diploma and certificate training for the people of Rowan County. The Rowan Campus is involved with specialized, flexible industry training through the KCTCS Workforce Solutions program located at our downtown extension. This program specializes in rapidly meeting the specialized training needs of the businesses and industries within our service region.

At **Morehead State University** the primary goal is the retention of students to the point of graduation with a bachelor degree. In many cases, these students will return to pursue a postgraduate degree. While offering a wide variety of degree and licensure programs MSU also utilizes ...student oriented approaches to assist students on their educational path. Student Life at MSU is very engaging in its support of students while they are enrolled in school. MSU boasts

more than 100 clubs and organizations as well as many other activities for students want to become involved.

Student retention and attainment of academic degrees

The retention of students and successful completion of degrees at both institutions involves an extensive array of student engagement practices currently utilized by the two institutions to assist students in staying in school and on their educational path and to a successful completion of Associate or Bachelor Degrees. It should be noted that certificates and diplomas do lead to students to work on their next educational degree level. It should also be noted that certificates and diplomas do provide many students with job opportunities that are equal to or greater than the student who achieves a two or four-year degree.

RC-MCTC and MSU always encourage students to strive to the highest point of academic success and degree attainment in their respective fields of study and/or interest. Both institutions work extensively with the communities they serve to encourage life-long learning, the training of individuals in specialized areas of business, industrial, healthcare and education, and in the areas of student service-learning in their respective programs. MSU also recruits extensively the students from the Rowan Campus of MCTC as well as other KCTCS colleges and campuses. There are several online transfer programs from Rowan Campus of MCTC and 2+2 agreements in place between the two systems.

Barriers of Education and Degree Attainment

There are a variety of circumstances that arise and may prevent a student from achieving a college or university degree. Even in communities where you have two post-secondary institutions, there are still students and parents who do not see themselves as "college material" or "college ready". Students never matriculate to either a community and technical college or a university. The lack of adequate preparation, the need for remedial courses during the first year of college, and first generational status cause many students to drop out their first year or complete and forgo the next academic year. In some cases, financial inability may be the hindrance to educational attainment. New rules established by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid, such as life-time funding limitations and the lack of assistance for those students. Funding opportunities for college can create hardships on students and their families.

The goal of improving the levels of degree attainment for the residents of Rowan County is shared by both institutions, the community partners and employers they currently work with, and future employers within the community. The institutions will commit to the endeavor of increasing the degree attainment percentage by developing plans to increase to the stated goal of 32% degree attainment in three years and 39% attainment within five years of associate, bachelor and master degree.

Plans for increasing degree attainment of adults (18-64 years of age) within Rowan County and meet the degree attainment plans of 32% in three years and 39% attainment within five years.

College Readiness, seamless transition between institutions, academic and career readiness:

- Morehead State University (MSU) and the Rowan Campus of Maysville Community and Technical College (RC-MCTC) will continue to collaborate to insure seamless transition from a two year college to a four-year university.
- RC-MCTC is starting to implement the Accelerating Opportunity initiative as a new approach to teaching by mixing career training with additional support for math, writing and reading inside and outside the classroom. (See Appendix F)
- Increase efforts to assist the local high school to increase the number of students who are college ready.
- Strengthen current programs that support student academic degree attainment, such as utilization of Upward Bound, SOAR, Workforce Investment Act, Workforce Solutions and working with the Adult Basic Education graduates to further their education.
- Invest in more scholarships to Rowan County students at both institutions.
- Increase dual credit students at the Rowan County Senior High School.
- Utilize college and university employees to participate in public school activities, such as career days and the Next STEP program through the Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce.
- Equip career and transfer centers at both institutions to assist with resume development, mock interviews and general preparation for employment.
- Increase the utilization of the college transfer centers to assist students who are transferring to and from a KCTCS college or four-year institution, such as MSU.
- Locate service-learning experiences for students within Rowan County

Current practices utilized by the Rowan Campus of MCTC and MSU:

- Academic Advising: This is crucial to ensuring students success. Increase the number of advisor workshops and training at both institutions by 10 percent. Master advising program for non-traditional students who need extra assistance upon their return to college.
- Both institutions offer foundational programs for students to enhance their skills in the areas of English, Math, Reading and Science.
- Face-to-face tutoring services programs on campuses offered free of charge to assist students who are academically struggling in a particular area or who need to learn new study habits to become successful.

- First year programs and courses designed to equip new students for the college academic experience.
- Minority, Disability and Veteran services are available at both institutions.
- Assessment center programs provide ACT, COMPASS, GED, Work Keys, computer literacy, business and industry testing opportunities and guidance as well as other academic examinations for CLEP or STEP.
- Supplemental instruction is available, which provides a tutor to attend class and hold study sessions for students.
- Student Support Services is a federally funded program that provides outreach and support for eligible students.
- At the Rowan Campus of MCTC, there is a college-wide focus on critical reading skills through the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan.

Community Engagement by the Rowan Campus of MCTC and MSU.

- Increase community awareness of programs and events on campuses.
- Strengthen partnerships with the industrial, business, educational and health professions to create more employment for highly trained individuals.
- Increase collaboration between entities to ensure the seamless transition of students from high school to either institution.
- Institutions will provide expertise to community individuals and entities that invest in the county and create jobs based on this qualified workforce.
- Intensify efforts to study the needs of the community and direct students to the appropriate employment opportunities within the county.

The postsecondary institutions within Rowan County will collaborate on strategies that have been put into place to increase the successful degree attainment of our citizens. As new state-wide agreements of collaboration and seamless transitioning continue, the efforts of MSU and RC-MCTC will provide measureable progress toward reaching the attainment percentages as aforementioned. We will continue to strengthen our relationships with community organizations like the Morehead – Rowan County Economic Development Council and the Chamber of Commerce to assist them in bringing high wage and high demand jobs to our area. Through these partnerships business and industry will recognize the quality of trained workers within Rowan County and assist in creating even more opportunities for the success and continued positive growth of Rowan County, Kentucky.