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*Career Readiness Credential
Subcommittee
Adult Learning Task Force*

*Career Readiness Credentials
GUIDELINES*

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Background

Why is the Adult Learning Task Force Recommending CRC Guidelines?

In Pennsylvania and elsewhere across the nation, the economic consequences of a lack of educational attainment are stark. The financial benefits of education and training beyond high school affect employment levels, earnings, home ownership and even the health and well-being of individuals and their families. Communities, states and the nation all benefit from higher educational attainment levels of individuals through increased tax revenues and decreased government transfer payments in the form of welfare, health subsidy and prison costs.

Employers are constantly advising workforce development professionals that they find a gap between those skills required on the job and those exhibited by many potential and current workers. These employers also report that many industries have difficulty hiring people with basic employability skills and trainable for specific jobs.

For many adult workers, formal education and training in traditional postsecondary education and training programs is not an option. These workers, however, may already have – or may be able to develop outside traditional education and training setting – many skills that employers value. For these workers, a career readiness credential (CRC) could provide value to both workers and employers.

When local service providers face the challenges of strengthening workforce capabilities and thereby the economies in their region, they may face tight budgets that seriously constrain their efforts. Under these circumstances, it is critical that every tool used by providers function as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Career readiness credentials (CRCs) cost money. They require an investment in tests, licenses, training, curriculum and materials. As a concept they can be very appealing and many providers who use CRCs, however, have plenty of anecdotal information. Hard, objective data proving the effectiveness of CRCs is difficult or impossible to find. This leaves the objective observer to conclude that CRCs may have something to offer, but unsure about the potential return on investment.

The PA Workforce Investment Board (WIB) wanted to learn more about CRCs and how they are used across the Commonwealth and the nation. The expectation was that once PA WIB members better understood what CRCs were about, they would develop policy recommendations and guidance for local WIBs and providers funded by the workforce development system regarding CRCs.

It should be noted that a CRC is not designed to serve as a substitute for an educational degree or occupational certification. In particular, CRCs should not be viewed or made available as a ticket to the workplace in substitution for a high school diploma. Educators and workforce development professionals agree that most job opportunities in the intensely competitive, global workplace of the 21st century will require a high school diploma based on a challenging curriculum and some postsecondary training or education.

For these reasons, a CRC is not an appropriate alternative to high school graduation. Instead, a CRC is designed to benchmark an individual's skills against a set of generic occupational skills. In contrast, a GED benchmarks an individual's competency in a set of academic standards. It is important for workforce and educational stakeholders to understand these distinctions to optimize the applicability of CRC as an effective workplace tool.

What Was the Process for Developing the CRC Guidelines?

In 2005, the PA WIB received a White Paper providing background on career readiness credentials across the Commonwealth and across the country.

At the October 2007 meeting of the PA WIB, the question of CRCs was referred to the PA WIB's *Council on Workforce of Tomorrow*, which developed an *Ad Hoc Task Force on CRCs* to address the question, "What should the Commonwealth's role be with regards to career readiness credentials?" This Ad Hoc Task Force convened twice to address this question. The first meeting took place in December 2007 with a second meeting by conference call in January 2008.

This Ad Hoc Task Force benefited greatly from a variety of perspectives, including employers, practitioners, and state experts and was able to come to agreement on some general recommendations.

Three options originally framed the discussion to define the state's role in establishing guidelines for a career readiness credential:

- *Laissez-Faire Approach*: Leave development of career readiness credentials to local WIBs or partnerships. Help develop and implement a credential model, support local efforts, provide training and technical assistance; and help local WIBs promote a credentials approach for businesses and other key stakeholders.
- *State Mandate*: The Commonwealth would endorse a single, statewide career readiness credential. The endorsement would be accompanied by such actions as funding, marketing, endorsement signatures by the Governor and Workforce Board Chairs on the credentials issued to employees, mandated tracking systems, and mandatory integration of the credentials into WIB operations and services.
- *Middle-Ground Approach*: The state would not move to endorse a single statewide credential, but would establish a framework that might include accrediting, approving, or recognizing local credentials, and supporting local activities to develop credentials.

At the first meeting, the Ad Hoc Task Force members decided to remove the option of the state endorsement of a single career readiness credential. Since each region of the state faces a unique set of circumstances around such indicators as economic base, types and needs of employers, and labor market, the Ad Hoc Task Force determined that a single credential could not meet the needs of every region. In addition, some regions had already adopted one of many career readiness credentials and integrated it in their operations.

At the second meeting, the Ad Hoc Task Force recommended:

- The Commonwealth should establish **standards** for evaluating any career readiness credential, based on input from employers. This input should come via the PA WIB and Industry Partnerships, both of which are employer-led entities. Any proposed CRC needs to align with what is already in place in the Commonwealth.
- There should be a **resource** at the state level to assist intermediaries in evaluating potential credentials against the Commonwealth's standards.

- The **focus** for Career readiness credentials should be on out-of-school adults. Youth still in the secondary education system should focus on completing high school – and a curriculum that leaves them college- or job-ready – and then entering postsecondary education or training for industry-recognized certifications or associate's or bachelor's degrees.
- The Commonwealth, through the PA WIB, should **promote** and market the idea of Career readiness credentials and should assist local WIBs in identifying the role this tool will play in the WIB efforts to meet employer and employee needs. This can be accomplished through integration of career readiness credentials into the **High Performing WIB criteria**. For example, every local WIB could be required to take a well thought-out position on what its members are going to do in their area. If the WIB has a local credential, it must align with State recommended guidelines.
- The issue of final recommendations regarding the state's role in career readiness credentials should be referred to the **Task Force on Adult Learning**, since the focus of career readiness credentials falls mainly on out-of-school adults.

Based on the last recommendation from the AD Hoc Task Force, the PA WIB referred the issue to the existing *Task Force on Adult Learning* to develop more concrete recommendations. The Task Force on Adult Learning then created a *Subcommittee on Career Readiness Credential* to answer the question in more detail with a report to the full PA WIB: "What should the Commonwealth's role be with regard to career readiness credentials?"

Since receiving its charge in Spring 2008 regarding the career readiness credentials, the Subcommittee has met nearly every month. Members first developed and refined a set of Design Principles to Guide the Scope of Recommendations. These principles were developed through discussion and consensus of the members attending the first meeting of the CRC Subcommittee as follows:

Design Principles to Guide the Scope of Recommendations

- **Population:** The recommendations will address 18-64 year old job seekers – both employed and unemployed adults of working age. The issue was transferred to the Adult Learning Task Force because the use of the CRC is intended for the adult working population
- **Channels or Delivery Mechanisms:** To assure alignment within the public workforce development system the recommendations should not limit the channels or mechanism of delivery of CRCs. For example, CRCs could be offered through faith-based organizations, Department of Public Welfare EARN Centers, Literacy Centers, PA CareerLinks, or community colleges, among providers. The recommendations should be biased towards being general. If an individual needs the skills or credential, it should not matter how those services are accessed.
- **Target Population Level of Educational Attainment:** The subcommittee members suggested that the recommendations stay focused on individuals in the mainstream developmental group with regards to literacy. Individuals with very low literacy require different interventions and strategies that are beyond the scope of the CRCs researched and discussed by the Subcommittee.

The Governor's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities should be consulted regarding the recommendations to avoid the inadvertent creation of unfair and unproductive exclusions or barriers.

- **Return On Investment/Value-Added:** The recommendations need to address issues of value-added and return on investment (ROI) of CRCs. When measuring these outcomes, too short a horizon excludes people and limits their progress; using a longer horizon to measure ROI is more inclusive. In other words, value-added is an important component of establishing the state's role and stake in CRCs, and the method for calculating value-added should include a longer tracking period of individuals, i.e., more than 6 months.
- **Resource Constraints:** The recommendations should include considerations of Pennsylvania's resource constraints and should not include recommendations that will exceed available financial resources to implement. Proposing recommendations that do not take into consideration resource constraints will create or increase frustration. The Subcommittee needs to keep the recommendations realistic and practical.

That said, the recommendations could have multiple levels. These would need to stratify components, first with a core that requires only funds currently available and then sequenced components that would come into play as funding increased to support them.

- **Statutory Barriers:** With regard to whether the recommendations should be limited to what exists in current law or should include recommendations for changes to statute, the Subcommittee chose to leave this option open.
- **Local Control:** The Subcommittee recognized the need to be mindful of differing regional needs and different delivery channels for CRCs and CRC services.
- **Recommendations Will Be Evidence Based:** Recommendations put forward by the Subcommittee must be supported by evidence that the recommendations will achieve the desired results.
- **Scope Includes Curriculum, Certificate, and Program:** For purposes of the Subcommittee's recommendations, CRC refers not just to the ultimate certificate, but also to linked curricula and programs as well. CRC-linked curriculum should identify any college-level components and use those components as a bridge to degree attainment.
- **Timeframe for Economic and Employment Environment:** Both the realities of today's extraordinary economic/job climate as well as the long-term view – 10 years for long-term view and 24 months for the short-term view – should inform the final recommendations.

The Subcommittee members include:

Members:	Affiliation
Matthew Schure, Chairman	Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine
Edna Baehre Ph. D. (Lori Fair)	Harrisburg Area Community College
Bill Brock	Central Workforce Investment Board
Stephen Curtis	Community College of Philadelphia
Nicholas Gallo	Savello USA INC
Clyde Hornberger, Ed.D.	Lehigh Career & Technical Institute
Mark Lafer	PA Higher Education Assistance Agency
Jamie Leitch	American Infrastructure
Shannon Miller	Central Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board
Bryon Noon	Bureau of Employment and Training, PA Department of Public Welfare
Beth Olanoff (Sarah Hollister)	PA Department of Education
Jane Pomerantz	PA Department of Labor & Industry
Susie Snelick	North Central Workforce Investment Board
Kathleen Shaw	PA Department of Education
Karyn Strachan	Specialty Bakers
Bill Thompson	Westmoreland/Fayette Workforce Investment Board
David Washburn	PA House of Representatives
Rose Brandt/ Michael Westover	Adult Basic and Literacy Education, PA Department of Education
Jeff Woodyard	Tri-County Opportunities Industrialization Center
Stephanie Workinger	Wellspan Health

Bob Garraty and Dan Kuba, PA WIB Executive Director and Deputy Director, also attended the meetings.

The following table lays out the chronological process for developing the final Guidelines:

July 24, 2008	Draft Design Principles sent to Subcommittee for review and comment
August 25, 2008	Revised Design Principles circulated to Subcommittee in preparation for August discussion

August 27, 2008	Subcommittee meets to finalize Design Principles and begin work on Guidelines
September 17, 2008	Subcommittee meets to discuss Guidelines
November 4, 2008	Revised Draft Guidelines sent to Subcommittee for review and comment
November 7, 2008	Subcommittee meets to discuss revised Guidelines
December 1, 2008	Revised Draft Guidelines sent to Subcommittee for review and comment
December 4, 2008	Subcommittee meets to discuss revised Guidelines
February 23, 2009	Revised Draft Guidelines sent to Subcommittee for review and comment
March 13, 2009	Subcommittee meets to discuss revised Guidelines
March 27, 2009	Revised Draft Guidelines sent to Subcommittee for review and comment and circulation for internal agency review
April 14, 2009	Final draft of Guidelines sent to Subcommittee and full Adult Learning Task Force
April 24, 2009	Adult Learning Task Force meets to endorse Guidelines for referral to full PA WIB
May 13, 2009	PA WIB meets to consider resolution endorsing Career Readiness Credential Guidelines

In addition to convening and facilitating the meetings of the CRC Subcommittee, Sidney Hacker, staff to the Subcommittee, conducted the following activities:

- Researched current state and qualities of various career readiness credentials across the country.
- Attended roundtable discussion on work readiness tools (WorkKeys, WIN, Work Certified, Keys2Work) at May 8, 2008 workforce conference.
- Conducted a survey of local WIBs regarding their use of career readiness credentials in March 2009
- Visited the SW PA Work Certified Academy in Washington, PA in April 2009

These activities were in addition to earlier efforts resulting in the original Career Readiness Credential White Paper (2006; updated 2007) presentation to the PA WIB, explaining the status of career readiness credentials and associated issues (2007). Efforts also included the PA WIB's Council on Workforce of Tomorrow ad hoc task force in 2007 and 2008, which resulted in a memorandum with options for the role to be played by the Commonwealth with regards to career readiness credentials.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Definition of Career Readiness Credential

For purposes of these guidelines, a “career readiness credential,” sometimes called a “Career Readiness Certificate” or “work readiness certificate,” is a portable certification that demonstrates to employers that an individual holding the credential has attained the core skills and abilities required for most industries and occupations. For example, receiving a minimum level on three WorkKeys assessments in Reading for Information, Locating Information and Applied Mathematics may result in receiving a Career Readiness Certificate (CRC). The ACT National Career Readiness Certificate, as well as the Work Readiness Certificate issued in many states is an example of one type of CRC. Attachments 1 and 2 to this report provide extensive descriptions of the various CRCs in use across Pennsylvania and across the country. A CRC is designed to benchmark an individual's skills against a set of generic occupational skills. In contrast, a GED benchmarks an individual's competency in a set of academic standards. Ideally, occupational and academic competency are linked or highly correlated. In fact, ACT's 2006 College and Workforce Training Readiness Study showed that the math and reading competencies for both were the same (or very comparable) based on a statistical study comparing ACT college-readiness benchmarked math and reading scores to WorkKeys “Applied Math” and “Reading for Information” scores for jobs requiring a high school diploma and some on-the-job training. WorkKeys has not been formally cross-walked against the GED to correlate competencies and skill levels. CRCs are described as “supplementing” GEDs, high school diplomas and postsecondary credentials.

Interest in a career readiness credential has arisen because of the recognition in both the private sector and government that a skills gap exists between those skills required on the job and those exhibited by many potential and existing workers. Many employers report that they have great difficulty in hiring people who have basic employability skills and who are therefore trainable for specific jobs.

The core skills required for most jobs include so-called “hard skills” used to perform basic duties, such as applied math, reading, writing, and finding information. Core skills may also include equally important but less quantifiable “soft” employability skills required to be an effective worker such as punctuality, communication, ability to work with others, problem solving, and willingness to accept supervision. The extent to which a career readiness credential attempts to identify, assess, and demonstrate attainment of “soft skills” varies among credentialing models.

Development of a credentialing process generally consists of four components:

- Identification of the skills needed to perform most entry-level jobs in the workplace which skills constitute the standards for the credential.
- Development of a valid test or other assessment tool that can determine whether an individual has attained the necessary career skills.
- Identification or development of a curriculum and instructional structure to assist individuals in acquiring the skills to demonstrate mastery of the standards.
- The issuance of a certificate or other credential that provides evidence that an individual has achieved mastery of the standards.

Examples of Career Readiness Credential Definitions

Virginia Career Readiness Certificate

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.

Michigan Career Readiness Certificate

The Michigan Career Readiness Certificate (MCRC) is a portable credential that signifies to a potential employer that an individual has achieved acceptable levels in the foundation skills necessary for success in the workplace.

North Carolina 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.

Louisiana Work Ready! Certificate

The Louisiana Work Ready! Certificate is a portable credential that signifies to an employer that an individual has certain fundamental skills necessary for success in the workplace, according to three subject areas: Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, and Locating Information.

Equipped for the Future Work Readiness Credential

The work readiness credential is a certification of work readiness for entry-level work as defined by employers. It is the first national standards-based assessment for entry-level workers to provide a universal, transferable, national standard for work readiness.

1.2. Purpose of CRC Guidelines

The purpose of this document is to provide a set of voluntary guidelines to employers and workforce development organizations to help them develop programs in particular industries or occupations that are useful to both workers and employers. The guidelines envision programs that provide the following:

- **For workers:**
 - A meaningful step on a legitimate career path for a worker;
 - Portability within an industry and across regions and occupations for a worker;
- **For employers:**
 - A certification of a prospective worker's knowledge and skills which can be relied upon with consistency by an employer;
- **For workers and employers:**
 - Assurance that a program offering a CRC has:
 - Clear standards;
 - High quality curriculum, instruction and materials; and
 - Fair assessment aligned to the standards.

It is important to repeat that a CRC is not designed to serve as a substitute for an educational degree or occupational certification. In particular, CRCs should not be viewed or made available as a "ticket" to the workplace in substitution for a high school diploma. Educators and workforce development professionals agree that most of the job opportunities in the intensely competitive, global workplace of the 21st century will require a high school diploma and some post secondary training or education. For this reason, a CRC is not an appropriate alternative to high school graduation.

A CRC assessment instrument must measure what an individual be required to know and be able to do in order to succeed in a particular occupation. The CRC instrument must be able to assess knowledge and behaviors relevant to a wide variety of high demand occupations pursued in multiple geographic areas.

2. WHAT IS A SUCCESSFUL CAREER READINESS CREDENTIAL?

2.1. *Successful for Whom?*

A successful CRC satisfies the needs of several different types of “customer” including job seekers, employers, education and training providers, and system administrators. The successful CRC will be aligned to the objectives of each of its customers.

- 2.1.1. *Employer.* The CRC must first meet the needs of the employer because the employer is the entity with the job. For the employer, success of the CRC is helping him obtain the services of individuals with skills that align to the jobs the employer has available. When the CRC helps the employer identify and hire job seekers with the skills the employer needs, the CRC is a success. CRC success also means a reduction in time-to-hire, waste and staff turnover and an increase in productivity, all resulting in a meaningful return on investment.
- 2.1.2. *Job Seeker.* CRCs are not solely a credential and should be viewed in terms of a continuum of activities, starting with the job seeker's efforts to align his or her competencies to those required by the certificate, then securing a job, retaining a job, and achieving job mobility, and finally, pursuing additional post-secondary training and education.

For the job seeker earning the CRC, success is achieving a credential that helps him get and hold a better job. Care should be taken in the development of the CRC's defined skill set that the CRC is aligned to actual employment opportunities. The CRC must take the job seeker to the next step of employment and training *and* meet the needs of the employer.

The job seeker's expectations with regard to a CRC must be realistic; a CRC is not a guarantee for being hired. The CRC, however, should meet the needs of the job seeker by bridging to the next step of the process/pipeline, such as employment or completing a degree or professional certification.

A secondary measure of success for the job seeker is the process of obtaining the credential. Meaningful changes to the job seeker may occur in the course of preparing for and taking the assessment required for receiving the CRC. For example, the process may allow for a series of small successes to keep the individual motivated to continue on to reach more significant goals.

- 2.1.3. *Training Provider.* For the provider, success is creating consistently high quality processes that generate effective, reliable feedback and training for the provider and job seekers, ultimately resulting in the job seeker's success. The CRC can offer a standardized curriculum, pathway and process, giving workforce development programs across a region consistency and cohesion. The CRC process offers providers with a clear start and end to the process of working with job seekers.
- 2.1.4. *Workforce Development System Administrator.* Having a consistent protocol for assessing and training job seekers can help identify trends or places in the process where job seekers consistently struggle, which may help point to elements of the workforce development system that need strengthening.

The value of the ROI (return on investment) and the ROE (return on equity¹) to both the employer and job seeker should be part of the measure of success and should be used to compare the CRC with other talent development tools.

2.2. Bridging to further education

Ideally, a CRC can provide a bridge for a worker to further education and training, especially to credit-bearing courses that can lead to a formal degree or certification. It can do so by clarifying gaps in the worker's knowledge, skills and abilities for their targeted occupation and provide some of the training to bridge the gap. The CRC process of assessment and training and the career information the worker receives in the course of obtaining the CRC should help remove barriers to further education and training by creating some vocational momentum and clarifying what the next steps might be for postsecondary education. The CRC process can clarify where the individual might require remedial coursework to prepare for credit-bearing coursework as well as improve basic competency in math and reading. The individual, as a result of the CRC process, should be able to envision a career or occupational path for himself or herself in place of simply thinking about the next job.

In addition, the curriculum supporting the CRC potentially could include college-level work that could translate to course credits towards a degree.

The Pennsylvania Statewide Task Force on Prior Learning Assessment has drafted general principles that list some of the assessments to determine prior learning outcomes worthy of being awarded credit. Further review may show that benchmarked scores on some career readiness credential assessments may indicate college-level competency that, under PLA protocols, could result in college credit awards.

¹ ROE = Net profit after taxes / stockholder's equity. By relating the earnings to the shareholder equity, an investor can quickly see how much cash comes from existing assets.

(<http://www.fool.com/investing/beginning/return-on-equity-an-introduction.aspx>)

$$ROI = \frac{(\text{Gain from Investment} - \text{Cost of Investment})}{\text{Cost of Investment}}$$

<http://www.answers.com/topic/return-on-investment>

3. GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING THE QUALITY OF A CRC

The PA Department of Labor & Industry in partnership with the PA Department of Education (PDE) and the PA Department of Public Welfare should issue a checklist for any entity to use when evaluating the adoption and implementation of a career readiness credential. The checklist should include the elements described in this set of guidelines.

The guidelines should not be mandatory. Mandatory guidelines would require state employees to oversee and enforce violations of the guidelines. Instead, the guidelines are intended to allow for local flexibility in a responsible context. Guidelines can foster efficiency by creating a protocol or standard evaluation process without constraining local choice. These guidelines are being presented in the same spirit as PDE's issuance of guidelines for Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), which include best practices of institutions reviewing applications and portfolios and granting college credit for prior learning that had not previously resulted in credit. It will be left up to the entities adopting CRCs to answer the question, "If the CRC vendor doesn't meet some portion of the guidelines, do I still use public money for their product?"

These Guidelines should help providers pick the most appropriate CRC, leaving the market to dictate which CRCs are adopted.

The Guidelines are presented below in order of their importance.

3.1. Legitimate Assessment Instrument and Training Curriculum

- 3.1.1. *Reliable and Valid Instrument.* The CRC must make use of validated and reliable processes and assessments. Valid means that the CRC is in fact measuring what it claims to evaluate. Reliable means the CRC is consistent over time. The vendor publishing the career readiness credential must be able to provide proof that the CRC assessment is valid, reliable, free from bias, and free from measurement error. These are technical requirements that show the assessment went through a rigorous development process resulting in a tool that provides consistent results and measures what it claims to measure.

Controlling the quality of the CRC program means that the CRC must be limited to its most appropriate use as defined by its developer. For example, a test that scores the alignment between a job seeker's skills and a particular set of occupations should not be used as a test of intelligence or as a college course entrance exam.

- 3.1.2. *Pre-Test.* A pre-test sets a baseline level of the job seekers skills and helps to determine what training is needed to reach the desired scores on the CRC assessment. Pre-tests and practice tests need to be part of the CRC program package.
- 3.1.3. *Training.* The provider must have -- or the ability to develop -- targeted training. A targeted training program will be required to allow for pre-tests to determine if the individual does not meet basic skill levels. Training must be flexible to meet identified specific needs of local employers. Training capacity should include on-site training and technical support.

The CRC program should include a curriculum that is directly tied to the pre-test results and the actual CRC assessment, so that an individual has access to the

training they need to bridge the gap between their pre-test score and the desired level on the CRC assessment.

- 3.1.4. *Adaptive and accessible.* Assessments must effectively address accommodations to persons with disabilities. There needs to be the capacity to provide assessments in a variety of settings. .

Assessments must be EEOC compliant. Drawing from non-discrimination contract language used by the PA Department of Labor & Industry, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) compliant means that the CRC shall not be used, by reason of gender, race, creed, color, disability, national origin, ancestry or age, to discriminate against any individual who receives services nor any employee who is qualified and available to perform the work to which employment relates.

3.2. Meet Employers' Needs

- 3.2.1. *Employer support.* Demonstrated employer support is a critical element of any CRC program. A CRC program should have broad-based employer recognition, including support from industry-based associations and/or individual employers – large and small. Employer support should span industry sectors and geographic locations, and should involve adapting their hiring practices to recognize CRCs. There should be evidence that employers are using the CRC whether or not government pays for it.²
- 3.2.2. *Occupational profiling.* The provider must have the ability to describe and quantify the skills and competencies of the various occupations in their region. Providers must be able to help employers identify the specific skills and competency levels required to fill positions within their businesses rather than placing the full weight of this burden on the employer. Clarifying occupational skills is key for connecting the career readiness credential to actual jobs. The CRC assessment must identify specific work-ready skills that indicate whether or not a job seeker is competent to enter a set of occupations based upon an occupational profile.

3.3. Portability

- 3.3.1. *Transferability.* Transferability or portability is what differentiates a Career Readiness Certificate from a specific occupational or single-employer certificate, such as an electrician's license or ACME Sporting Goods customer service certificate. Any career readiness credential that is issued should represent skills that are transferrable across occupations and across industry sectors. A transferable CRC should be portable from one geographic location to another, as well as from one employer to another, and within reason, from one industry sector to another.
- 3.3.2. *Multiple Employers.* The CRC needs to avoid being tied to a single employer. For a CRC to be truly portable, more than one employer must be involved in its design, adoption and implementation.

² It is important to note here that not all Subcommittee members agreed with this language. They would have preferred that the sentence read, "There should be evidence that employers are using the CRC" and would not have made it contingent on the absence of government funding.

- 3.3.3. *Industry Partnerships.*³ Industry Partnerships (IPs) should play a leading role in vetting CRCs because IPs by definition involve multiple employers and firms of varying sizes. The CRC vetting process would be further strengthened if multiple IPs from different sectors and locations are involved.

3.4. Measures of Success/ Quality Control

- 3.4.1. *Defined Measures of Success.* A Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) or other service provider should define how the value added by the CRC program would be measured before adopting a CRC program. The CRC performance measures are critical for telling the story of the CRC's impact on the customer. Providers should be willing to track the impact of the CRC by documenting the results for job seekers and employers not using the CRC and comparing it to those using the CRC.

- 3.4.2. *Return on Investment.* Measures such as Return on Investment (ROI) disclose the impact of the job seeker's and employer's investment of time and money in the CRC. One way to measure ROI is to calculate the savings in *reduced time-to-hire, reduced turnover, and increased productivity* of workers with CRCs compared to the cost of the change in human resource practices to recognize a CRC.

Descriptions of social return on investment (SROI) could help capture the less tangible effects of the CRC, such as improvements in self-esteem or improvements in family dynamics.⁴ A recent report released September 2008 can be helpful in measuring SROI because it documents the impact of educational attainment on the individual and the community in Pennsylvania.⁵

- 3.4.3. *Volume is Secondary.* Measures of volume are important because without a critical mass of individuals holding CRCs and employers honoring the CRCs, then the CRC is not going to be useful. Measures of volume that deal strictly with the number of people served or number of tests taken, however, only tell part of the story of whether or not the CRC program is worth the time and investment to the employer or the job seeker.

3.5. What the CRC Measures

- 3.5.1. *Hard Skills.* At a minimum, any assessment should include various hard skills, i.e. applied math, reading, and writing, with the specific combination of hard skills determined by local subscribers based on employers' needs.

³ Industry Partnerships are a particular kind of "workforce intermediary," a so-called dual customer institution that helps connect and meet the needs of both workers and businesses. Industry Partnerships bring together multiple employers, and workers or worker representatives when appropriate, in the same industry cluster to address common or overlapping human capital needs.

⁴ One methodology for measuring and describing Social Return on Investment can be found at <http://www.redf.org/system/files/%284%29+SROI+Methodology+Paper+--+Chap+1+-+Investment+Philanthropy.pdf>

⁵ Neeta P. Fogg, Paul E. Harrington, Ishwar Khatiwada, Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, *The Tax and Transfer Fiscal Impacts of Dropping Out of High School in Pennsylvania*, PA Department of Labor & Industry, (September 2008). http://www.paworkforce.state.pa.us/youth/lib/youth/pdf/fiscal_consequences_dropout_in_pa.pdf

- 3.5.2. *Soft Skills.* Soft skills include behavioral competencies, such as showing up to work on time, accepting direction from supervisors, working well as a member of a team, and dealing with customers in a professional manner. Determining the degree to which a job seeker has attained proficiency in soft skills requires first that a specific set of soft skills is clearly defined, and second, that measuring soft skills competency is done through a process of observing, verifying and demonstrating those skills. There has yet to emerge a single test that measures soft skills competency, but observed activities and processes can help identify the soft skills competencies of individuals.
- 3.5.3. *Literacy Limits.* It is important to keep in mind that taking a CRC assessment or engaging in a CRC program requires a base level of literacy, usually at least an eighth grade reading ability. If a local WIB plans to implement a CRC program, they must be mindful of this fact and be clear as to how job seekers falling below this literacy level will access the CRC program. Ideally, the job seeker not meeting the initial literacy level for the assessment should have access to a program such as Career Gateways that specifically is designed for preparing an adult for postsecondary training and education.

3.6. Information Provided to Employer and Job Seeker

- 3.6.1. *Documentation.* The provider must have the ability to develop and provide career readiness credential documentation that allows the job seeker and prospective employer to understand clearly the work readiness skills demonstrated by – and readiness for employment of – the job seeker.
- 3.6.2. *Credit-Bearing Training.* Where college-level learning is a part of the CRC curriculum, it should be separately identified and assessed so that a college can make a determination about credit awards. This process should be integrated into the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) process outlined by PDE and adopted by various colleges and universities across the Commonwealth.

3.7. Marketing Plan

Marketing is essential to the success of a CRC program and therefore, a CRC program should not be adopted without a marketing plan. Marketing is the means for informing employers and job seekers alike of the existence and value of a CRC. A marketing plan should:

- Clarify the target audience(s),
- Articulate the message, which should include a clear statement of the problem a CRC addresses and why it is the best solution, and where to obtain more information,
- Identify channels and strategies for communicating the message,
- Set a marketing budget, clearly stating the resources to be used in executing the marketing plan, and
- Outline action steps, responsibilities, and timeframes for marketing the CRC program, and
- Define how the success of the marketing plan will be measured.

3.8. Provider Capacity

The provider issuing the CRC must have the capacity to coordinate and integrate all components of a Career Readiness Certificate program based on employers' identified needs, or at least have the ability to develop the capacity to do so. The CRC program should make use of clear standards, aligned curriculum, and fair assessments.

4. SUMMARY

These Guidelines may not capture all the virtues of every career readiness credential; the guidelines are not designed to be exhaustive. They are designed to address the necessary and sufficient elements for a reliable and effective career readiness credential and to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of any CRC under consideration. A LWIB choosing to invest precious resources in a CRC now has standard elements against which to evaluate the options.

These Guidelines should result in the selection of an efficient and effective workforce development tool. If the Guidelines are to be an effective tool over the long run, they should be revisited and modified to incorporate employers', employees', and providers' relevant experiences with implementing career readiness credentials. Also, the Guidelines should be opened to modification should objective outcome information on career readiness credentials make the case for doing so. As needs, tools, and research findings change, the Guidelines should be revisited to make sure they continue to be relevant and effective.

SUGGESTIONS NOT A PART OF THE GUIDELINES (AKA “GOOD THINGS TO WORK TOWARDS”)

CRCs, wherever possible, should be aligned or cross-walked with Career, Education and Work Standards as published by PDE. The twelve academic standards should also be a part of the alignment between employers’ standards, the CRC and the Career, Education and Work Standards. This would allow for better translation and discussion in conversations about how to integrate the education and workforce development systems. It would also support local efforts at collaboration.

ATTACHEMENT 1: DESCRIPTION OF CAREER READINESS CREDENTIAL ACTIVITIES IN PENNSYLVANIA AND OTHER STATES

(NOTE: This Attachment is excerpted from the 2007 version of the White Paper on Career Readiness Credentials. Some of the information regarding participating regions may have changed over the last two years.)

Most states that are actively pursuing a career readiness credential are concentrating their efforts on one of two national models: (1) Equipped for the Future's Work Readiness Credential and (2) the ACT WorkKeys Career Readiness Certificate. However, a third model, Work Certified, is being adopted in a handful of local areas.

A. Equipped for the Future's Work Readiness Credential

The Equipped for the Future (EFF) initiative, directed by the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), is developing a Work Readiness Credential. EFF's objective is a national, portable certification of work readiness that certifies a worker's ability to "succeed in entry-level work in the 21st Century workplace." The Credential is to be based on a set of standards that identify what workers must know and be able to do for entry-level jobs in areas, such as the following skills: communication, interpersonal, decision-making, and lifelong learning. Individuals meeting the standards must be able to complete tasks such as:

National Institute for Literacy's Equipped for the Future

State Government Partners

- Workforce Florida, Inc.
- New Jersey Department of Labor and New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission
- New York State Workforce Investment Board, State Department of Labor and State Education Department
- Washington State Workforce Training, Education and Coordinating Board

National Partners

- National Association of Manufacturers
- National Retail Federation
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- Institute for Educational Leadership
- National Skills Standards Board Institute
- National Governors' Association

- Acquiring and using information
- Using technology
- Working with others
- Problem-solving
- Avoiding absenteeism and maintaining proper grooming
- Completing work in a timely and accurate manner.

Thus, the EFF standards focus mainly on the "soft skills" necessary to succeed in the workplace, with some measurement of basic math, reading, and technology skills. A two-and-a-half hour assessment to determine attainment of the skills necessary for the Credential has been tested. The EFF implementation timeline calls for limited operation of the assessment in up to 50 sites around the country in September and full access to the EFF assessment and credential (i.e., across the country) no later than the first quarter of 2007. As of April 2007, the National

Work Readiness Council operated 45 assessment sites in 18 states including three in

Pennsylvania.¹ According to the EFF partners, the development of the credential and the assessment tools were guided by the Uniform Employee Selection Guidelines (CFR 28.50.14) adopted by the EEOC, the Civil Service Commission, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Justice.

Proponents of this approach maintain that these basic employability skills are the skills most lacking for entry-level workers today. Skeptics of the EFF approach argue that these behavioral skills are the most difficult to quantify and assess, and question whether the EFF assessment tool (which has been tested but is not yet operating as of July 2006) will be a valid one. They also raise concerns that the focus on soft skills will move the attention away from the vitally needed hard skills like math, reading, and writing.

EFF has gained support from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other national business groups. Four states - New York, New Jersey, Florida and Washington - have made significant financial contributions to the effort (ranging from \$350,000 to \$500,000 per state). The partners have recently formed a 501(c)(3) organization, the National Work Readiness Council, to manage the credentialing process and promote the Work Readiness Credential.

B. Career Readiness Certificate Based on WorkKeys

The other credential being backed by several states is the Career Readiness Certificate based on the WorkKeys system (WorkKeys is produced by ACT). The Career Readiness Certificate is considered to be more applicable to entry-level workers with slightly higher skill levels than EFF. In contrast to the EFF approach, WorkKeys focuses on measuring attainment of the following “hard skills”:

- Reading for information
- Applied mathematics
- Locating information

Also unlike EFF, the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) has more than one tier of certificate, with the tiers reflecting the level of difficulty of the skills mastered (i.e., as measured by the score on the WorkKeys career readiness assessment). For example, Virginia awards three tiers of certificate (Gold, Silver, and Bronze), while Indiana awards two tiers (Gold and Blue).

The CRC has gained acceptance in several states. At least 15 states are already issuing CRCs and approximately 17 states have joined the Career Readiness Certificate Consortium to assist each other in developing the credential and to pursue the goal of multi-state portability. In addition, 17 other states and local areas have adopted or supported use of the WorkKeys system to various degrees, without actually adopting it as a single statewide credential. Unlike the EFF process, however, the CRC does not seem to have attracted support from major national employer groups.²

Career Readiness Certificate Based on WorkKeys

States Issuing CRC

- Alabama
- Arkansas
- Florida
- Georgia
- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Michigan
- Missouri
- New Mexico
- North Carolina
- Oklahoma
- Virginia

Virginia is one of the states at the forefront of the CRC movement. At least 7,900 workers have attained a Virginia CRC thus far. In addition, the Virginia system includes assistance for those who are not successful in attaining the certificate. Targeted training and education is available through the Community Colleges and One-Stop Career Centers for those who do not initially achieve the certificate.

Building on its partnership with these states, ACT launched a “national career readiness system” on September 15, 2006. Under this system, an individual who earns a state CRC designation will have the option to obtain a national certification in addition to their state certification. The national certification seal will then be added to their state certificate.³

Proponents claim that case studies and anecdotal information show the CRC to be a valuable tool. They also believe that it is best positioned to become a portable credential reaching across states because it is more widely used and tested than any other credential to date.

Critics contend that the primary focus of CRCs on hard skills ignores the other skills that employers say are lacking in many job applicants. They also believe that, despite its use in several states, the business community has not widely backed it and that its use is not employer-driven. Finally, skeptics note the absence of concrete outcomes and other empirical data about its effectiveness.

The CRC partners maintain that the WorkKeys model is compliant with equal employment opportunity and has never been challenged in court since its development 15 years ago.

C. Work Certified (Treasure Coast, Florida)

There are numerous other career readiness systems in place on a local level in other states. One model that has shown promise based on the outcome data that have been gathered is the Work Certified program, developed by the Treasure Coast and Palm Beach workforce development regions in Florida. Designed using employer focus groups, with the assistance of the National Skills Standards Board, Work Certified training and assessment cover reading comprehension, mathematics, business writing, use of computer and business tools, customer service, work maturity, and other skills.

Work Certified in the Treasure Coast and Palm Beach regions claims to have the endorsement of more than 50 employers, who give preference to Work Certified applicants. In addition, Work Certified is one of the few initiatives with some outcome data. Ninety-two percent of Work Certified applicants find employment within 30 days. Eighty-six percent of those employed are still employed six months later and 27 percent received promotions. In addition to Treasure Coast and Palm Beach, several local workforce boards elsewhere in Florida, as well as in Illinois and Texas, have adopted Work Certified.

Career Readiness Credentials Activities in Pennsylvania

There are several career readiness programs and activities underway in Pennsylvania, including both skill standards and certifications. The Task Force heard presentations on several of these efforts.

A. YES (Your Employability Skills) Certificate

The Your Employability Skills (YES) program was originally developed in York County for adults, but was expanded later to high school students. The YES certificate requires:

- 120 hours of the YES training curriculum (which was developed by a business consortium led by Harley Davidson and encompasses both soft skills and hard skills)
- 95 percent attendance in training classes
- A high school diploma or GED
- Passing of drug screens
- Passing scores on the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) math and reading aptitude and the Wonderlic Personnel Test for problem-solving aptitude.

As of early 2006, more than 100 employers in the York County area were supporting YES, according to its sponsors. In the first phase of YES, which served adult workers, over 1,430 adults met the requirements and were awarded the YES certificate, with more than 1,200 (84percent) securing “improved employment.”

There is interest in adopting YES outside of York County. For example, as many as five high schools in Erie County expect to pilot the YES program in the 2006-07 school year.

B. Youth Work Ready Competencies

The Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board, the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board, and the Philadelphia Youth Network developed the Work Ready Competencies for youth employment programs. The Work Ready competencies are designed to give youth employment programs a uniform listing of the basic competencies that youth need to qualify for entry-level jobs in their region. The development process included focus groups with employers. The competency areas covered include:

- Basic reading, writing, speaking, listening, and math skills
- Basic jobs seeking skills
- Basic job retention skills, such as responding appropriately to supervision, demonstrating dependability, respecting diversity and understanding teamwork
- Basic technology skills
- Basic life skills, such as time management and personal financial management

- Basic personal skills, such as critical thinking skills and demonstrating self-discipline and honesty.

The Youth Work Ready Competencies give direction to youth employment providers on how it should be preparing its youth participants. The Competencies can also be used to assess the effectiveness of programs.

C. Ready Program

The Readiness Employment Ability Development for You (READY) program is a 91-hour training program designed to improve the employability skills of unemployed and underemployed adults. READY was developed by the Greater Hazleton Partners in Education, a consortium of business and education leaders. York's Your Employability Services (see above), Utility Business Education Coalition, PPL Utilities, and other area business assisted in the development. READY trains workers in basic and advanced math, computer skills, time management, teamwork, and other skills identified as necessary by local employers. Students must complete the course of study in order to receive the READY certificate.

There is heavy business involvement and support for READY. Participating businesses share the program costs. READY has also been adapted for specific employers. For example, READY worked with Simmons mattress manufacturing to develop a 100-hour READY curriculum for that manufacturer's needs. The Greater Hazleton Partners in Education reports that nearly 90 percent of workers completing the program have retained their employment.

D. North Central WIB Work Readiness Credential

The North Central Workforce Investment Board (WIB), working with its six-county region Employer Consortia (which is made up of over 150 employers), has developed a Work Readiness Skills Standards and Credential. It began by setting forth the skills that employers across all industries want to see in their entry-level workers. The North Central WIB and the Employer Consortia adopted 20 skills standards. From that list, they focused initially on six Tier I skills to be covered by a Work Readiness Credential:

- Displays Responsible Work Behaviors
- Teamwork
- Safety
- Reading
- Mathematics
- Writing.

After reviewing various assessments used to gauge attainment of the six Tier I areas, the North Central WIB and the Employer Consortium reached agreement on the appropriate criteria for demonstrating attainment of the Tier I skills. North Central is contracting with high schools,

community colleges, technical schools, and universities to provide the work readiness skills standards as part of their current offerings.

Persons achieving all six of the Tier I areas can receive a Work Readiness Skill Standard (WRSS) Credential card. A program consisting of 11 modules, 68 competencies, and 98 hours of instruction is in place. Participants completing all 11 modules and scoring at least 80 percent on a certification test are eligible to receive the WRSS credential. The first WRSS credential was recently issued to a displaced homemaker in Clearfield County.

Development of a Work Readiness Skills Standard Credential encompassing the remaining 14 skills standards areas is underway. The North Central WIB is working with a consultant who helped develop the Work Certified program for the Treasure Coast and Palm Beach WIBs in Florida (see above). The ultimate goal is a 3-tiered credential targeting all 20 skills identified by the North Central WIB and Employer Consortia.

E. Keys2Work

Keys2Work is primarily a career development and job matching system based on WorkKeys that is targeted to high school students. It provides a "common language" or tool that can match students' actual skill levels to various occupations and earning potential. Through Keys2Work, high school students take the WorkKeys assessment to match their abilities with workplace skill standards. The assessment measures student skills in three "WorkKeys" skill sets — reading, applied math, graphical interpretation — that employers deem most important to them.

Using the Keys2Work system, students can discover the careers and occupations for which they have the interest and skills. They can also identify gaps in their skills so they can improve the skills they need for the kind of jobs they want. Based on their WorkKeys profile, the students receive information on employers, colleges, and other higher education institutions that fit their skills and interests. Since it is based on the WorkKeys system, Keys2Work can also support a Work Readiness Certificate for specific occupations.

Keys2Work started in a nine-county region of Southwestern Pennsylvania, but is also used outside of Pennsylvania in areas like Jacksonville, FL and Syracuse, NY. Keys2Work reports that it serves over 60,000 students and job seekers and over 500 employers nationally.

F. ABLE/PA WIN Workplace Foundation Skills Framework

In the last several years, the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Adult Basic Literacy and Education (ABLE) has invested considerable energy and resources on work-related basic skills activities to support Pennsylvania's workforce development initiatives. As part of this work, it created the Pennsylvania Workforce Improvement Network (PA WIN) to support the approximately four-dozen local ABLE-funded programs in providing workplace education services.

PA WIN developed a Foundation Skills Framework, modeled after the EFF standards, to provide a common language and understanding of the basic skills, knowledge, and competencies adults need to obtain or maintain jobs and advance to higher paying jobs.

The Framework, illustrated by a workplace standards wheel (see Attachment 2), divides essential skills into three categories:

1. Basic Workplace Skills, including applied math, reading with understanding, writing clearly, speaking clearly, use of technology, and locating and using information and resources
2. Basic Employability Skills, including problem-solving, working in teams, interpersonal skills, and self-management
3. Basic Workplace Knowledge, including working within an organizational structure and understanding finances.

The Framework is not currently used as the basis for any certificate or credential, but is used to guide incumbent worker training and other workplace training programs funded by ABLE.

ATTACHMENT 2: TABLE OF CAREER READINESS CREDENTIALS ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA

	WorkKeys Career Readiness Certificate	Work Readiness Credential
PURPOSE	Portable credential that certifies that an individual has attained the “core employability skills required across multiple industries and occupations.”	National credential certifying that an individual can meet the demands of entry-level work and learn on the job.
Outcome	Career Readiness Certificate certifying core employability skills required across industries and occupations	Certification of work readiness for entry-level work
Originator/Sponsor	ACT	Equipped For the Future (EFF); 4 investor states – FL, NJ, NY, WA
Skills Assessed	Applied Math, Reading for Information, Writing, and Locating Information	Communication, Interpersonal, Decision-making and Lifelong Learning skills. Tasks are organized based on SCANS categories
Method of Assessment	WorkKeys assessment of skills; provides up to 3 levels of certificate based on assessment score: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bronze: possesses skills needed for 30% of jobs ▪ Silver: possesses skills needed for 65% of jobs ▪ Gold: possesses skills needed for 85% of jobs 	Web-based system 2½ hour assessment that covers four modules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Situational judgment ▪ Oral language ▪ Reading with understanding ▪ Using math to solve problems
Business Involvement	Varies depending on state	Supported by U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Center for Workforce Preparation, the National Association of Manufacturers’ Center for Workforce Success, and the National Retail Federation Foundation.
Targeted User	Adults and high school students	Individuals seeking entry-level work
Years in Operation	Since 2004. National certificate being launched in September 2006	Standards and benchmarks developed by 2002. Soft launch of assessment and credential scheduled in up to 50 sites in September 2006

	Work Certified
PURPOSE	Regional, employer-driven Work Readiness Certification for incorporation into One-Stop System
Outcome	Work Readiness Certificate
Originator/Sponsor	Treasure Coast Workforce Development Bd., Workforce Alliance (Palm Beach), Indian River and Palm Beach Community Colleges (also, National Skill Standards Board was an original sponsor)
Skills Assessed	<p>Hard and soft skills, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mathematics ▪ Use of computer and business tools ▪ Work maturity ▪ Reading comprehension ▪ Business writing ▪ Customer service
Method of Assessment	<p>To earn the Certificate, candidate must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Master 50 competencies ▪ Successfully complete 90 hour training ▪ Score 80% or better on certification exam
Business Involvement	Designed using employer focus groups. Now endorsed by more than 50 employers, who give preference to Work Certified applicants.
Targeted User	Entry-level job seekers
Years in Operation	Since 2003
Comments	Ninety-two percent of Work Certified applicants find employment within 30 days. Eighty-six percent of those employed are still employed six months later and 27% received promotions.

	YES (Your Employability Skills) Certificate	Youth Work Ready Competencies
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Outcome	Certificate	Performance measures for providers
Originator/ Sponsor	Manufacturers' Ass'n of South Central Pennsylvania; York County Alliance for Learning	Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board, the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board, the Philadelphia Youth Network
Skills Assessed	<p>Hard skills, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Math ▪ Reading ▪ Writing <p>Soft skills, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Problem-solving ▪ Communicating with others ▪ Working in teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Basic reading, writing, speaking, listening, and math skills ▪ Basic job seeking skills ▪ Basic job retention skills, such as responding appropriately to supervision, demonstrating dependability, respecting diversity and understanding teamwork ▪ Basic technology skills ▪ Basic life skills, such as time management and financial management ▪ Basic personal skills, such as critical thinking and demonstrating self-discipline and honesty
Method of Assessment	<p>Requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 120 hours of the YES training, ▪ 95% attendance in training classes ▪ High school diploma or GED ▪ Passing drug screen ▪ Passing score on TABE math and reading ▪ Passing score on Wonderlic Personnel Test for problem solving aptitude 	Various, including performance based
Business Involvement	Recognized/supported by 100+ York County employers	Competencies have been vetted through corporate partners in Philadelphia and Allegheny County
Targeted User	Adults and high school students	High school students and out-of-school youth
Years in Operation	Adult program started in 1996; youth program started in 2001	Approved in March 2005
Comments	Taught in high schools as elective for seniors	

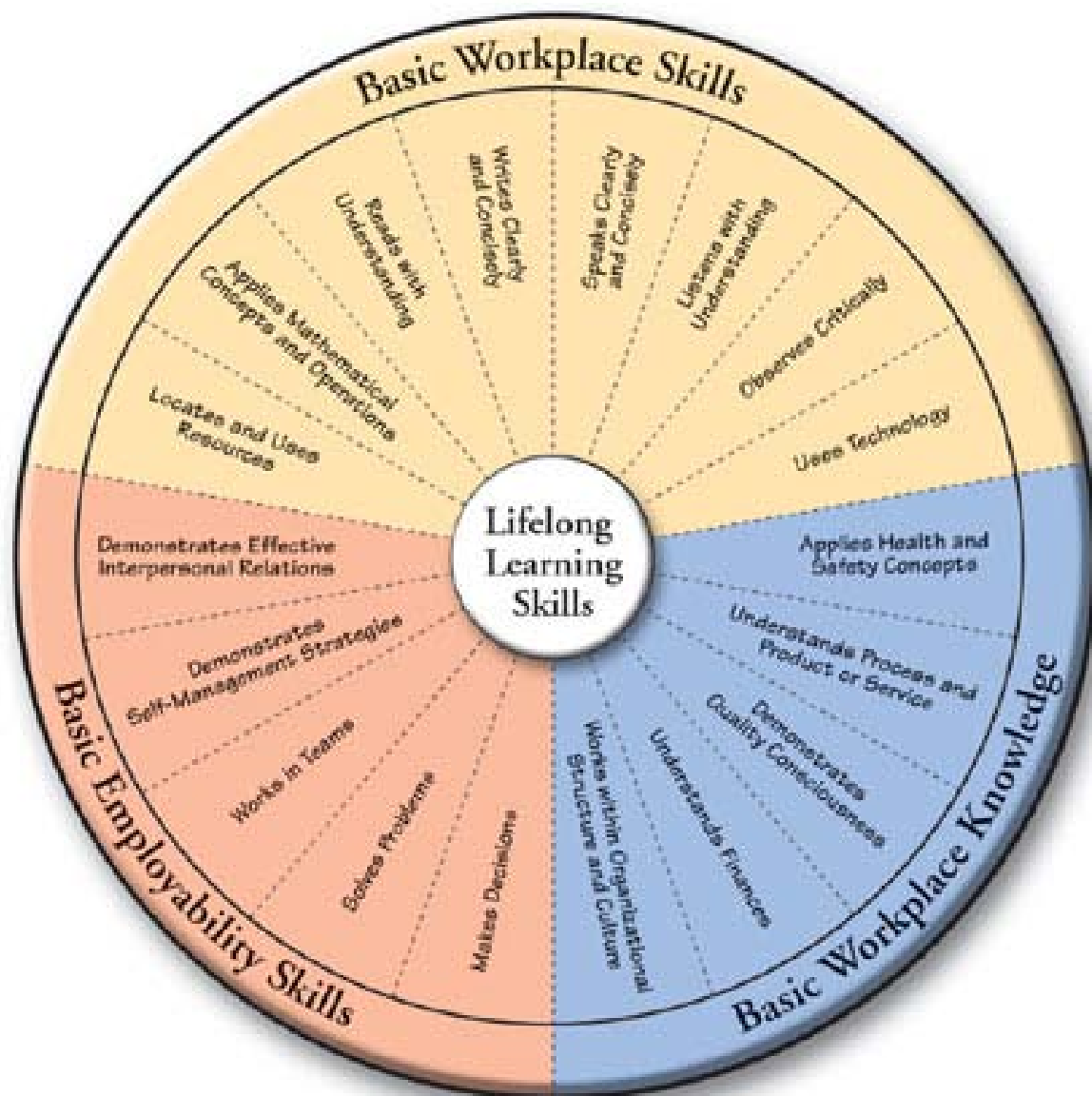
	Readiness Employment Ability Development	ABLE/PA WIN Workplace Foundation Skills Framework
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	for You (READY) Program	
Purpose	Improve the employability skills of unemployed and underemployed adults.	Provide a common language and understanding of basic skills, knowledge, and competencies adults need to obtain or maintain jobs and advance to higher paying jobs.
Outcome	Certification of readiness based on completion of 91-hour training program	Tool to guide incumbent worker training and other workplace training programs funded by PA Bureau of Adult Basic Literacy and Education.
Originator /Sponsor	Greater Hazleton Partners in Education (PIE), a consortium of business and education leaders (York County's Your Employability Services (YES) program assisted in development)	PA Bureau of Adult Basic Literacy and Education, through the PA Workforce Improvement Network (PA WIN)
Skills Assessed	Basic and advanced math, computer skills, time management, teamwork, and other skills identified as necessary by local employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Basic Workplace Skills, including applied math, reading with understanding, writing clearly, speaking clearly, use of technology, and locating and using information and resources ▪ Basic Employability Skills, including problem-solving, working in teams, interpersonal skills, and self-management ▪ Basic Workplace Knowledge, including working within an organizational structure and understanding finances
Method of Assessment	N/A	N/A
Business Involvement	Utility Business Education Coalition, PLL Utilities, and other area business assisted in the development. Participating businesses share the program costs.	N/A
Targeted User	Unemployed and underemployed adults	Adult workers
Years in Operation	Since 2000	Since 2000
Comments	PIE reports that nearly 90% of workers completing the program have retained their employment	Based on the Equipped for the Future (EFF) standards

	North Central WIB Work Readiness Credential	Keys2Work
Purpose	Certification demonstrating attainment of skills that regional employers across all industries want to see in their entry-level workers.	Career development and job matching system to help high school students discover the careers and occupations for which they have the interest and skills, and identify gaps in their skills.
Outcome	Work Readiness Certificate	Skills profile; also basis for Work Readiness Credential for specific occupations
Originator/ Sponsor	North Central WIB and Employer Consortia	Keys2Work, a nonprofit project of Smart Futures
Skills Assessed	<p>Initial six skills assessed are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Displays Responsible Work Behaviors ▪ Teamwork ▪ Safety ▪ Reading ▪ Mathematics ▪ Writing <p>Ultimate goal is 3-tiered credential targeting 20 skills.</p>	<p>Online assessment measures students' skills in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reading ▪ Applied math ▪ Graphical interpretation
Method of Assessment	Assessments in six skill areas adopted by NCWIB and Employer Consortia	The assessment measures student skills in three "WorkKeys" skill sets: reading, applied math, graphical interpretation
Business Involvement	Employer Consortia (made up of over 150 employers) developed the Work Readiness Skills Standards and Credential	Keys2Work reports that it works with over 500 employers nationally.
Targeted User	Entry-level job seekers	High school students
Years in	Since 2003	Since 1998

Operation		
Comments	North Central WIB is working with consultant who helped develop Work Certified for Treasure Coast and Palm Beach WIBs	Keys2Work reports that it serves over 60,000 students and job seekers nationally.

ATTACHMENT 3: FOUNDATION SKILLS FRAMEWORK WORKPLACE STANDARDS WHEEL



¹ National Work Readiness Credential Update: April 2007. <http://www.uschamber.com/icw/strategies/nwrcupdate.htm>.

² CRC News from Individual States, updated August 9, 2007. <http://www.crcconsortium.org/state-news.htm>

³ National Career Readiness Certificate FAQs. <http://www.act.org/certificate/faq.html#relate>