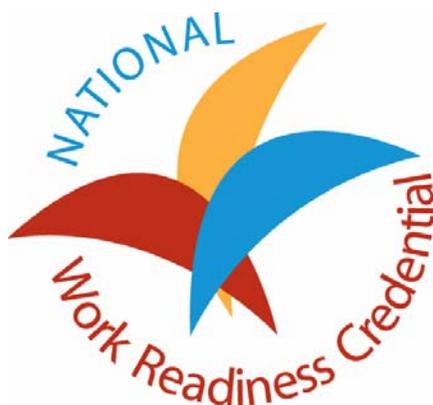


Becoming an Assessment Site for the National Work Readiness Credential

An introductory guide to
becoming an assessment site



Date Effective: September, 2006

In September 2006 the National Work Readiness Council (NWRC) will begin a targeted launch of the National Work Readiness Credential (WRC) in approximately 50 sites around the country. During this 'soft' launch, which will extend through December 2006, it is estimated that up to 10,000 individuals will take the assessment. We are now accepting applications to participate in the soft launch.

The full launch of the WRC will begin in January 2007. We will begin to accept site applications for the full launch in December 2006. Businesses and organizations accepted as soft launch sites will not need to reapply.

This Guide will help you determine if your business or organization is appropriate to be an assessment site during the soft launch or full launch.

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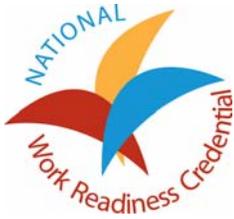
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Start-up Checklist

This simple checklist outlines the steps to complete in order to offer the assessments leading to the National Work Readiness Credential.

- ✓ Say "YES" to offering the National Work Readiness Credential.
- ✓ *Identify* the appropriate assessment location. See the technical requirements for more detailed information. System setup consultation is delivered by our partner, CASTLE Worldwide, for this computer-based assessment.
- ✓ *Complete* and *submit* the *National Work Readiness Credential Assessment Site Application*.
- ✓ *Meet* requirements in this guide and become a certified assessment site.
- ✓ *Promote* the opportunity to earn the National Work Readiness Credential.
- ✓ *Recruit* candidates for the National Work Readiness Credential assessment.
- ✓ *Offer* assessment sessions for the National Work Readiness Credential.

What is the National Work Readiness Credential?



The National Work Readiness Credential (WRC) is the first national, portable certification of work readiness. Based on nationally-validated Equipped for the Future (EFF) applied learning standards and business consensus on what work readiness means, the WRC provides a common, business-defined national standard for work readiness.

The National Work Readiness Credential Assessment has been developed specifically to assess the knowledge and skills that underlie the WRC. By assessing the skills, knowledge, and tasks identified by businesses as important to successful performance by entry-level workers¹, the WRC is designed to address the following purposes for the workforce development system:

- To enable adults and older youth to demonstrate to prospective employers that they have the knowledge and skills needed for successful performance as entry-level workers.
- To streamline the hiring process for businesses, by identifying a work-ready pool of entry-level job applicants.
- To improve the ability of local, regional, and state workforce development systems to reliably identify and consistently refer work-ready applications to their business customers.
- To improve the ability of adult basic education and workforce development systems to help individuals develop the knowledge and skills required to be fully competent entry-level workers in the 21st-century workplace.

The WRC is an internet-based assessment that can be delivered securely in a wide range of sites including businesses, one-stop centers, community colleges, community-based organizations, adult learning centers, workforce training centers, union-sponsored programs, junior achievement offices, high schools, and testing centers. Candidates may include both native and nonnative speakers of English. The WRC will be of special interest to individuals entering the U.S. workforce for the first time, individuals returning to the workforce after some time away, and individuals transitioning from one industry to another.

¹ Entry-level jobs are non-supervisory, non-managerial, nonprofessional positions. These may be unskilled positions or they may be skilled positions where the required job-specific skills can be learned while on the job.

The National Work Readiness Credential (WRC) includes four assessment modules – the Situational Judgment test, and the Oral Language test, the Read with Understanding test, the Use Math to Solve Problems and Communicate test. Through these four assessment modules, candidates will be assessed in nine communication, interpersonal, problem solving, and self-management skill areas that employers across a range of industry sectors agree are critical to effective performance of entry-level work. These skill areas include:

- read with understanding
- speak so others can understand
- listen actively
- observe critically
- cooperate with others
- resolve conflict and negotiating
- use math to solve problems
- solve problems and making decisions
- take responsibility for learning

Candidates are allotted a total of three (3) hours to complete the four assessments, with individual allotments as follows:

Situational Judgment – 60 minutes

Oral Language – 30 minutes

Read with Understanding – 45 minutes

Use Math to Solve Problems – 45 minutes

Candidates must register for all four assessments at one time, although they are not required to take all four modules in one sitting. All four assessment modules must be taken for the first time within a thirty-day period.

Candidates will receive their results no later than three weeks after taking the fourth test. Those who pass all four assessments will be awarded the National Work Readiness Credential. Those who fail to pass one or more of the assessments will receive a diagnostic score report that will identify the areas in which they need to improve in order to meet the work readiness standard and earn the Credential.

Candidates who fail to pass one or more of the four assessments must wait a minimum of twenty-five days between retakes of the same assessment component. This wait period allows for receipt of scores and further candidate preparation. While there is no limit to the number of times an individual can retake the assessments, there will be an additional charge for each retake.

Candidates must pass all four modules within one year to be eligible for the credential.

Requirements and Resources

All sites will be required to meet minimum specifications for equipment, procedures, staffing, physical space, and other characteristics that are important to the particular assessment. Additionally, sites will be required to meet specified security and delivery standards. Potential assessment sites will follow application procedures established by the NWRC.

Please review the minimum hardware, software, and other requirements listed on the following pages.

Technical Resources

Technical consultation from CASTLE Worldwide is available to any site location that offers the assessment. A first-time affiliation/installation fee of \$300, plus \$25 per proctor, will apply.



Registration and Fee Management Resources

CASTLE Worldwide offers great flexibility to manage assessment registration and payment. Candidates may register for the assessment at the test site immediately prior to test delivery, and the following payment options will be available:

- Credit card payment (Visa or MasterCard) by individual candidates prior to testing using CASTLE's secure e-commerce capabilities.
- Pre-pay vouchers which may be ordered through CASTLE's website by credit card (Visa or MasterCard). If your site wishes to purchase vouchers on behalf of your candidates, you may do so through CASTLE's website at the following URL address: www.castleworldwide.com/nwrc.
- Post-pay vouchers for pre-approved organizations/institutions. (May require a guaranteed minimum number of candidates per year.)

Technical Requirements for Becoming a Testing Center

The following information indicates the basic requirements for a testing center. These requirements specify the minimum hardware and software setup that is necessary.



Minimum setup required:

- Internet access with either Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0 or higher) or Netscape (7.1 or higher)
- High-speed Internet connection (recommended)
- Sound cards (to hear the audio)
- Media player (such as Microsoft Media Player 9)
- Mouse with mouse pad
- USB stereo headset/microphone
- Headphones must be provided for each candidate
- Keyboard
- 15" or 17" SVGA color monitor (or larger)
- Printer

* Please note that there are no RAM or memory requirements for your computer.

Connectivity, minimum requirements

Reliable and fast Internet access is required. Preferred connections include:

- Minimum 56K connection (128 kbps or faster greatly preferred) to a reliable Internet service provider

Testing stations, minimum requirements

- Individual testing stations allow candidates to log into the testing system and complete their test registration.
- Individual testing stations are at least three to four feet apart, allowing adequate room for spacing candidates.
- Testing area has good lighting and is free from outside noise.

National Work Readiness Council (NWRC) Specifications and Fees

NWRC Soft Launch

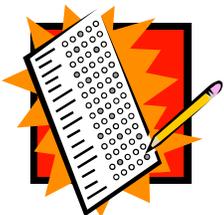
In September 2006 the National Work Readiness Council will begin a targeted launch of the National Work Readiness Credential in approximately 50 sites around the country.

The purpose of this targeted access 'soft' launch is to enable the NWRC and CASTLE Worldwide, its assessment delivery partner, to ensure that all systems are in place and working properly and to begin to collect operational data on test takers in order to confirm that candidates that score high enough to pass all four assessments and earn the National Work Readiness Credential are more likely to: carry out their work competently; be retained; be judged as competent workers by their supervisors; easily learn new tasks on the job; and therefore, advance on the job or in their career.

Sites that meet one or more of the following criteria will be given preference in the soft launch:

- Businesses/Organizations in NWRC partner states that have been selected by the partnering lead agency. (See partner list on page 9.)
- Businesses/Organizations that have participated in the NWRC field test.
- Businesses/Organizations that are willing to participate in NWRC data collection associated with ongoing validation.

NWRC reserves the right to approve all sites for delivery of the assessment.



To be certified, a site must:

- Provide delivery of the assessment in an environment conducive to testing, such as a training facility, conference room, or other area dedicated to this purpose, with appropriate equipment.
- Be able to meet all technical requirements (hardware, software, connectivity).
- Be able to meet all other physical site requirements.
- Be handicap accessible with appropriate restroom facilities and a water fountain. Sites must also be able to provide accommodations to individuals with disabilities.
- Train at least 2 individuals to serve as proctors. (Note: There must be 1 proctor per exam room for up to 12 candidates. If there are more than 12 candidates per room, an additional proctor is required for each group of 12 test takers. Proctors must be at least 18 years old and trained by CASTLE Worldwide.)
- Submit site certification fees*:
 - \$300 for site certification
 - \$25 for each proctor trained

** Each site will be billed upon acceptance of the site application, completed trial run, and completed proctor training.*

Site Recertification**

Sites may need to be recertified under the following conditions:

- a. Changes in the delivery system that require changes in hardware, software, or other fixtures of the site.
- b. Failure to meet the following criteria for quality performance:
 - *At least 1 proctor is present in the exam room for every 12 candidates.*
 - *The environment is conducive for test taking.*
 - *Equipment is properly configured and operates correctly.*
 - *Proctors are well-trained, familiar with the test delivery system, and able to troubleshoot candidate problems.*
 - *Safety measures are in place and adhered to.*
- c. Receipt by CASTLE Worldwide or NWRC of 5 or more complaints from test takers (within a 6-month period), including:
 - *Proctors leaving the candidates unsupervised and being unavailable to assist candidates during the exam*
 - *Consistent environmental issues (dim lighting, noisy, bad climate control)*
 - *Consistent hardware and/or equipment issues (PCs not configured correctly, not enough headsets, etc.)*
 - *Proctors who are not familiar with logging into the test delivery system*
 - *Proctors who are unable to troubleshoot efficiently (i.e., when there is a temporary Internet connection failure, the candidate accidentally unplugs hardware connections, etc.)*
 - *Proctors who are not enforcing security measures (checking IDs, supervising candidates, storing cell phones and personal belongings away from candidates' desks, preventing cheating, etc.)*

** Any site needing recertification will be required to submit a \$300 recertification fee.

Per Candidate Credentialing/Testing Fees

All four assessment components (first-time and retake candidates)	\$65
Oral Language assessment (per retake).....	\$25
Situational Judgment assessment (per retake)	\$15
Reading assessment (per retake)	\$15
Math assessment (per retake)	\$15

Application Submission

After reviewing all of the requirements listed in the previous pages, please complete and submit the *National Work Readiness Credential Assessment Site Application* available at the following location:

http://www.castleworldwide.com/nwrc/asp/nwrc_site_application.asp

NWRC Founding Partners (January 2003-July 2006)

District of Columbia

DC State Agency for Adult Education

Florida

Workforce Florida, Inc.

JA Worldwide

New Jersey

New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission
New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

New York

New York State Workforce Investment Board
New York State Department of Labor

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Economic Policy Council

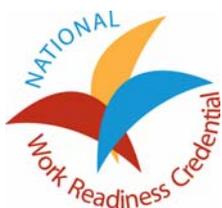
Washington

Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

National Advisors

Institute for Educational Leadership Center for Workforce Development
National Association of Manufacturers Center for Workforce Success
National Association of Workforce Boards
National Governors Association
National Retail Federation Foundation
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Center for Workforce Preparation

About the NRWC and CASTLE Worldwide, Inc.



The National Work Readiness Council (NWRC) is a not-for-profit organization established by the state and national partners that have supported the development of the National Work Readiness Credential (WRC). The NWRC aims to enhance the skills of the nation's jobseekers and to improve access for business to a more skilled and flexible workforce. Managing the operation of the national work readiness credential certification program is a core function of the NWRC, which is based at the US Chamber of Commerce's Center for Workforce Preparation.

The National Work Readiness Credential (WRC) was created to address the persistent skills gap identified by employers at the first rung of the career ladder. It is built on the solid research foundation of the National Institute for Literacy's Equipped for the Future (EFF) Standards as well as more than a decade of work at the U.S. Department of Labor on SCANS and O*NET, and years of work in states across the country building industry-specific skill standards.

The NWRC is partnering with CASTLE Worldwide to deliver the National Work Readiness Credential assessment. Founded in 1987, CASTLE Worldwide is one of the nation's leading certification and licensure testing companies. Located in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, CASTLE Worldwide offers examination design, development, and administration services.



For more information, contact:

NWRC

Attn: Executive Director
National Work Readiness Council
Center for Workforce Preparation
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
1615 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20062-2000
e-mail: nwrc@uschamber.com

CASTLE

Attn: NWRC Account Coordinator
CASTLE Worldwide
900 Perimeter Park Drive, Suite G
Morrisville, NC 27560
919-572-6880 (telephone)
919-361-2426 (fax)
web: www.castleworldwide.com