



Oregon Career Readiness Certificate

Fall 2009

CRC Implementation Update

This is the first in a series of periodic updates on the statewide implementation of the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) in Oregon. This first update includes a brief overview of the CRC, its history in Oregon to date, upcoming events and electronic links to relevant information. A dedicated CRC link is now on the Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) web site: <http://www.oregon.gov/CCWD/>.

The National Career Readiness Certificate

(NCRC) in Oregon will provide documented, transportable, skills-based certification that will assist Oregon citizens in obtaining employment within Oregon and across the nation. Employers will recognize the CRC as a meaningful credential and have confidence that certificate holders have the skills necessary to be successful in the workplace. Employers can benefit by realizing reduced recruiting and hiring costs, lower training costs, and reduced employee turnover.

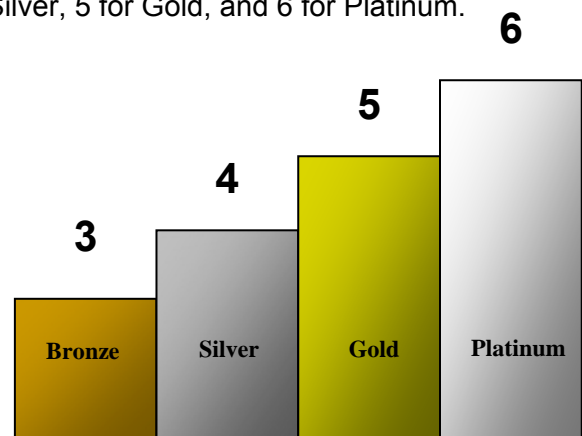
Career Readiness Certificate programs are being implemented in thirty-five states at varying levels. Key states reporting the credentialing of significant numbers of individuals (more than 50K) include Indiana, Michigan, Florida, South Carolina, and Georgia since 2007.

American College Testing (ACT) uses WorkKeys®, its nationally proven, skill assessment system, to certify the job readiness of examinees. The CRC applicants in Oregon take three foundational WorkKeys® assessments: Reading for Information (RI), Applied Mathematics (AM), and Locating Information (LI).

Why These WorkKeys® Assessments?

Proficiency in these three skill areas is necessary in more than 85% of the approximately 16,000 profiled occupations included in the ACT Occupational Profile database.

A minimum score of 3 on each of the three assessments is required to receive certification at the Bronze level. Scores of 4 are required for Silver, 5 for Gold, and 6 for Platinum.



Oregon has awarded approximately 722 Career Readiness Certificates since July of 2008: 0 Platinum, 324 Gold, 289 Silver, and 109 Bronze.

Job seekers in Oregon have several avenues through which to earn their CRC. Typically, participants start with the Initial Skills Review, a product from the Worldwide Interactive Network (WIN), offered at the local WorkSource Oregon (WSO) centers.

The WIN self-paced, online courseware is also available to participants (at WSO centers, some community colleges, and some high schools) to further assess and upgrade an individual's skills in preparation for proctored CRC testing.

The three CRC, foundational skills assessments (AM, RI, and LI) are available to Oregonians through core, service delivery providers which will include community colleges, education service districts, WSO centers, and high schools. The WIN curriculum and CRC assessments are being used in some adult basic skills, GED, and CTE pilot programs. Other pilot projects are ongoing across the state.

History of the CRC in Oregon

The CRC initiative in Oregon began in 2007, with strong support from Governor Kulongoski and Oregon's business community. It was then that Oregon began further exploration regarding the value of the certificate to Oregon's business, education and workforce communities.

Initial activities included:

Forming the Steering Committee

The CRC Steering Committee was created in early 2008, with the Department of CCWD as the lead state agency. A broad representation of employers, employer groups, educators, and state agencies make up the Steering Committee, including representatives from the Oregon Business Council, E3, and the Oregon Business Association.

Establishing support across sectors

The CRC is a component in the strategic plans of:
Governor Kulongoski
Oregon Workforce Investment Board (OWIB)
Oregon Business Council (OBC)
Oregon Business Association (OBA)
Oregon Business Plan

The CRC is also a component of Governor Kulongoski's Vision for Oregon's Workforce:

[Vision for Oregon's Workforce](#)

Governor Kulongoski signed the first Oregon Career Readiness Certificates in April 2009. In spring of 2009, the State Board of Education approved a score of 5 (a gold level) on the Applied Mathematics and Reading for Information WorkKeys® as alternative assessments to the essential skills requirement to achieve the new Oregon high school diploma.

Establishing initial projects

The skill-building and job-readiness priorities of the OWIB provided early funding for the CRC implementation.

One of the first CRC projects occurred at Lebanon High School. Five local manufacturers in the Lebanon community signed on as partners recognizing the value of the CRC. These included Allann Bros. Coffee, Oregon Freeze Dry, Palm Harbor Homes, Pennington Seed, and Weyerhaeuser Lumber Mills.

David Douglas High School, a Portland Metro area high school, has also piloted the CRC assessments.

Issuing an Invitation for Proposals (IFP)

In spring 2009, CCWD issued an IFP to support initial CRC development projects. Nine community colleges and four workforce partners were awarded \$30,000 grants in June 2009.

These IFP projects will serve as prototypes for the future implementation of the CRC program statewide:

- Blue Mountain Community College
- Clackamas Community College
- Columbia Gorge Community College
- Lane Community College
- Linn-Benton Community College
- Mt. Hood Community College
- Portland Community College
- Tillamook Bay Community College
- Treasure Valley Community College
- Enterprise/Chemeketa Community College
- Central Oregon Workforce Investment Board
- Ontario Training and Employment Consortium
- Linn-Benton-Lincoln Workforce Investment Board

Recent Activities include:

Creating the CCWD and E3 Partnership

CCWD has partnered with E3, Employers for Education Excellence, a statewide education non-profit launched by the Oregon Business Council in 1996. E3 has been very successful in building partnerships between employers and education and in launching initiatives over the years. René Léger (E3's Executive Director), will serve as a loaned executive to the CRC Program in the coming year. Mr. Léger will work closely with the CCWD staff, businesses and community partners on the planning and implementation of the statewide CRC effort.

Enabling legislation

House Bill (HB) 2398 was passed by the Oregon Legislature in June of 2009. The bill was signed into law by Governor Kulongoski on July 28, 2009. HB 2398 provides funding for the implementation of the CRC program by CCWD in collaboration with the Employment Department, State Workforce Investment Board, Department of Education, and the State Board of Education.

Establishing Funding

The statewide implementation of the CRC includes \$3.35 million for the 2009 to 2011 biennium. Funding streams include a combination of ARRA and WIA Title IB. The budget will support a Marketing and Communication plan, additional Requests for Proposals, contracts with the companies who provide the assessment products, and two staff positions at CCWD.

Establishing the Implementation Committee

The CRC Business Plan Committee reconvened and was renamed the CRC Implementation Committee. This committee has decision-making authority, and its work will focus on developing and implementing the CRC. The initial meeting of the Implementation Committee occurred on July 29, 2009. The committee met again in early October and will meet periodically as necessary. The membership of this committee includes representatives of CCWD, OWIB, OBC, OBA, OED, the Governor's Office, private industry, other workforce partners, and staff of the CRC team at CCWD. The larger, CRC Steering Committee serves the CRC initiative in an advisory capacity to the Implementation Committee, providing input and feedback from diverse stakeholders.

What's new and what's next with the CRC in Oregon?

The **CRC Implementation Committee** will meet again on November 12, 2009.

Surveys

The CRC staff at CCWD and OBC have conducted interviews across multiple sectors of the education, workforce, and business communities to ascertain a baseline understanding of the CRC, its perceived value, and the perceived barriers to implementation.

An electronic survey of staff at WorkSource Oregon centers and at the community colleges was completed recently as part of the goal to develop a seamless, sustainable, and customer-oriented system for Oregonians seeking the CRC.

CCWD staff, E3, and the Implementation Committee are moving forward to identify performance indicators for the CRC strategic plan.

The CRC Team will continue to support and assist the projects funded via the IFP process referenced above. As a part of this support, the CRC Implementation Updates and a [CRC Information and Project Matrix](#) will be updated periodically and be available on the agency website.

A list of trained CRC testing proctors is also available upon request.

If you have questions or need more information, please contact the CRC staff at CCWD including questions or suggestions for future updates at 503.881.9511 or at Todd.Nell@state.or.us.



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