



Georgia Work Ready Initiative Fact Sheet

Overview

Georgia Work Ready was launched in August 2006 by Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce to **improve the job training and marketability of Georgia's workforce and drive future economic growth for the state**. It is the only initiative of its kind to be conducted through a partnership between a state government and state chamber of commerce, ensuring that companies can more reliably match the right people with the right jobs.

This workforce training initiative assesses the skills of Georgia's workers, determines valuable job training opportunities and assures companies that the state can provide a long-term, qualified labor supply. Through a voluntary workforce assessment system called Georgia Work Ready, the program measures the "real world" skills that employers believe are critical for job success today and for mastering the innovative technologies tomorrow's jobs will require.

Work Ready utilizes the nationally accredited WorkKeys[®] assessment system developed by ACT to measure individual workers' skills in the areas of applied mathematics, reading for information and locating information. Participating individuals then receive a Work Ready Certificate that indicates their level of "work readiness" based on their performance.

The Georgia Work Ready initiative includes four key elements:

- **Work Ready Certificate:** Designed for individuals, it allows workers to take a free job assessment and then become eligible to receive a certificate indicating their skill and knowledge levels to potential employers. The certificate guarantees that job seekers have the portable skills – **applied mathematics, locating information and reading for information** – to serve as a solid foundation for more customized training. Assessments are conducted through Georgia's system of technical colleges and three Board of Regents colleges with technical divisions. The technical colleges, along with the 20 local workforce investment boards, provide free online gap training to help workers upgrade their job skills.
- **Work Ready job profiling:** Designed to help Georgia employers build the right workforces for their needs, Georgia Work Ready's job profiling program allows Georgia employers to profile required job tasks and skill levels to more easily match candidates to job opportunities. By comparing job profiles with individuals' certification levels, companies can make reliable decisions about hiring, training and program development. Normally a \$2,000 value, profiling is conducted at no cost at Work Ready Centers located at the state's technical colleges for those employers that meet minimum hiring criteria.

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- **Certified Work Ready Community:** This voluntary initiative enables communities to demonstrate that they have the talented workforce needed to fill current and future jobs. The certification also shows a community's commitment to education and to improving public high school graduation rates, important factors for driving businesses to an area. Community leaders and those in the education, business and industry sectors all can come together to help their communities achieve the Certified Work Ready Community designation.
- **Work Ready Region:** Through this program, which builds on the Certified Work Ready Community designation, multiple counties work together to develop regional talent pools aligned to a common, existing strategic industry. Work Ready Regions must be able to demonstrate that they have met the following criteria: improved regional public high school graduation rates; counties obtaining Certified Work Ready Community status; increasing the number of students in strategic industry majors in two- and four- year colleges; closing the skills and achievement gaps; successfully transitioning workers into higher skilled jobs; and training the existing workforce in high tech skills to improve productivity and competitiveness.

Benefits

Georgia Work Ready offers numerous advantages for Georgia workers, current and potential employers in the state and all Georgia communities.

For Workers:

- ✓ Ability to demonstrate skills to current and potential employers
- ✓ Valuable job training opportunities
- ✓ Opportunities for career change and advancement

For Businesses:

- ✓ Assurance that employees have the right skill sets
- ✓ Improved hiring procedures
- ✓ Reduced turnover and training costs
- ✓ Increased productivity
- ✓ Higher employee morale

For Georgia communities:

- ✓ Valuable tool to attract new business to an area
- ✓ Proof of a talented workforce to fill current and future jobs
- ✓ Economic growth opportunities

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Fast Facts

- As of April 2009, more than 59,000 Georgians have earned Georgia Work Ready Certificates
- More than 25,000 job seekers earned Certificates in 2008; more than 4,000 of these were high school seniors
- More than 275 active job profiles on file
- More than 120 counties have made a commitment to earn the Certified Work Ready Community designation, and many more have indicated interest in participating
- 16 Work Ready Regions have been funded in advanced manufacturing, aerospace, bioscience and logistics

The Governor's Office of Workforce Development

Governor Sonny Perdue created the Governor's Office of Workforce Development (GOWD) to link education with workforce and to align efforts with economic development to ensure competitive advantage. Through initiatives like Work Ready, Georgia is creating the formula for successful partnership among education, workers, and industry to build a smarter, better-skilled workforce that makes it easier to transform companies into global competitors while empowering individuals to achieve their career goals and ambitions.

For more information

To learn more about the Georgia Work Ready initiative, visit www.gaworkready.org. The Governor's Office of Workforce Development's customer service can also be reached at help@gaworkready.org.

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