



Woodbury County Becomes the First ACT Work Ready Community in Iowa

Woodbury County officials announced their success in becoming the first county in Iowa to achieve the ACT Work Ready Communities certification on Friday, January 25th. Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, Director of Iowa Workforce Development, Beth Townsend, and ACT officials participated in the announcement.

States, counties and economic development agencies across the United States have adopted the ACT Work Ready Communities program as a means of providing companies evidence of a skilled workforce. The framework allows each participating community to measure and improve the skill levels of its workforce through a standardized workforce skills credential—the National Career Readiness Certificate.

It's a big deal to be the first county in Iowa to become an ACT Work Ready Community because this certification provides local employers and prospective companies with credible data on the workforce in our county," states Keith Radig, Chairman of the Woodbury County Board of Supervisors. "This is a nationally recognized program that helps companies make an apples-to-apples comparison when it comes to analyzing a community's skilled workforce, and at a time when workforce is a key-issue that many states are facing, having this certification will help us distinguish ourselves from other areas," states David Gleiser, Woodbury County Community & Economic Development Director.

Work Ready Communities certification is based on two parts: 1.) the number of individuals in the workforce who obtain the National Career Readiness Certificate by demonstrating proficiency in applied mathematics, understanding workplace documents, and graphic literacy; and 2.) the number of employers who utilize the credential in their hiring processes.

The Iowa-based company, ACT, sets a target number of individuals that must have the certificate, as well as a target number of employers that recognize the credential. Results show that Woodbury County has exceeded the number of proficient workers that have earned the certificate (8,704) and has more than double the number of employers (185) required for certification.

The process to become an ACT Work Ready Community began in 2018 when Woodbury County convened representatives from the Sioux City Community School District, WITCC, Iowa Workforce Development, the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce/The Siouxland Initiative, and the Sioux City Economic Development Department to apply to the program as a county team.

Members of the team have since completed the two required ACT Work Ready Communities Boot Camps where they developed a workplan to increase the number of certificate holders within different segments of the county's workforce. More than 21,000 employers currently support the certificate nationwide and Site Selection magazine uses ACT's certificate data yearly to rank state competitiveness.

"This work speaks to the focus and commitment we all have for cultivating a skilled workforce in Woodbury County and we look forward to capitalizing on the benefits it will provide," states Chris McGowan, President of the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce and The Siouxland Initiative.

With Woodbury County's certification, Iowa is the 27th state to participate in the ACT program. For more information, contact David Gleiser at (712) 279-6609, or visit: www.workreadycommunities.org/IA/193.