



Connecting ALABAMA COUNTIES and EDUCATION for a Career-Ready State

Success Story



Location:
Alabama



Time Period:
Mid-2000's-Present

“Employers in the region understand a job seeker’s potential and feel that they are getting a better-qualified employee with the NCRC.”

—**Donny Jones**, Chief Operating Officer at the Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce

Across Alabama, there’s a deep disconnect between local economic development efforts and the education system. Meanwhile, the state’s economy continues to grow, and it’s estimated to add 500,000 high-skilled employees by 2025 to meet industry labor demands.

In order to bridge the gap, numerous counties are leveraging career readiness testing to take career interest inventories, identify opportunities for work training, and connect labor to regional demand.

A Closer Look at Two Counties

Tuscaloosa County became a certified **ACT® Work Ready Community (WRC)** in 2016 in an effort to create a talent pipeline solution for potential employers and appeal to economic development site selectors. This is a key differentiator for West Alabama because only 25% (17 of 67) counties currently leverage county certification as part of their overall workforce ecosystem. The **ACT® WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate® (NCRC®)** is woven into every component of the West Alabama workforce system—one of the main reasons the region is a model of best practice for increasing career equity for every student possible.

Meanwhile across the state, **Morgan County** partners with **Calhoun Community College** to connect local high school students with employers to provide valuable work training. Earning certification status as an ACT® Work Ready Community enhances local economic recruiting for Morgan County.

One of those local employers is **Decatur Utilities**, a company that has created a sustainable pipeline of talent by using **ACT® WorkKeys® Assessments** for its Line Worker Apprenticeship program. The assessments provide the utility company greater insight into specific skills required for the job. Decatur Utilities hires with greater confidence because skills have been validated, resulting in much lower turnover.

Both regions of Alabama have experienced unique success due to the statewide implementation of the WorkKeys NCRC, as well as collaborative partnerships across education and businesses working to sustain and grow local communities.

Statewide Outcomes

26%

of Alabama counties participating in ACT® WRC

651

employers in Alabama supporting WorkKeys NCRC

10,000+

Monthly WorkKeys NCRCs Earned

