



# Certified Work Ready Communities

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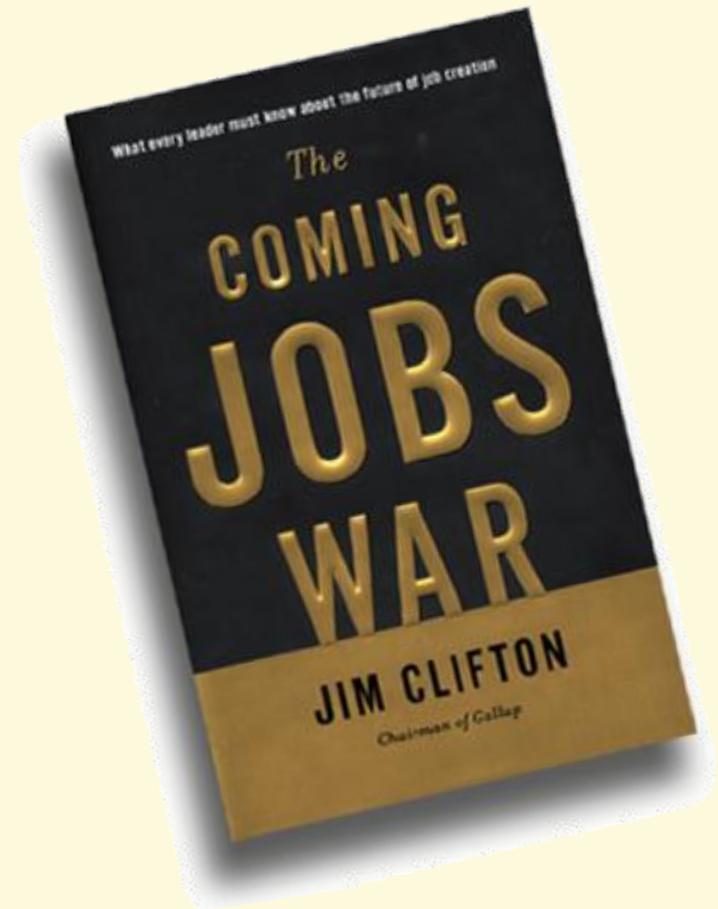
March 28, 2013

# Does this sound familiar?

A young dad has been looking for work for six months after he lost his job due to a plant closing. He is struggling to make his case on his resume that he has skills that can translate to other companies currently hiring. He knows he has value but his confidence is shaken.

A local manufacturing company is struggling with turn over and loss production because they are challenged in finding people with the right skills they can train to do the work.

- Economic growth is paramount
- Everyone wants a good job
- So – why are companies unable to find people with the right skills?



## Who we are...

- ACT is a not-for-profit public trust
- Our mission is:

*Helping people achieve education and workplace success*

- Best known for ACT® college entrance exam
- Also provide the Work Readiness System

# ACT<sup>®</sup> WorkReady System

- *Understand Job Skill Requirements*
- *Measure Individuals' Skills*
- *Develop Skills to Match Requirements*
- *Certify Individuals in Essential Skills*





# NATIONAL CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE<sup>®</sup>

A Gold National Career Readiness Certificate is awarded to

**JANE P. SAMPLE**

In recognition of verified skills essential to workplace success and career advancement.



Registered Certificate # JSAMPLE001  
Issue Date: July 26, 2011

**ACT**<sup>®</sup>

Official National Career Readiness Certificate. Registered by ACT.

# Job Qualification of Certificate Holders (Cognitive Skills)



99%



93%



67%



16%

Source: ACT Job Pro Database

# NCRC approved for college credit!

- American Council on Education Approved the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) for Postsecondary Academic Credit
  - **Silver** = 3 semester hours in applied critical thinking
    - Vocational Certificate Category
  - **Gold and Platinum** = 3 semester hours in applied critical thinking
    - Baccalaureate and Associate Degree Categories
- Individual Institutions Adopt the Policy
  - [www2.acenet.edu/credit/](http://www2.acenet.edu/credit/)



# NCRC Return on Value

- ✓ A national survey of businesses using the NCRC and the ACT Work Readiness System
- ✓ 82% of businesses are using the system as part of an organizational selection process
- ✓ Reported benefits of the system:
  - ✓ 86% confirm that its benefits justify its cost
  - ✓ 67% report a reduction in organizational turnover
  - ✓ 63% report improved employee on-the-job productivity
  - ✓ 82% state that the NCRC is important for meeting organizational goals



*How do you build the  
workforce development  
'eco-system'?*



# Why is ACT investing?

- What we know
  - Well documented national skills gap problem
  - Supply and demand pipeline issue
- A Solution
  - WorkKeys® tools have been successfully deployed in the market place to help businesses find and educators produce a skilled workforce
- The Implementation Plan
  - Certified Work Ready Communities

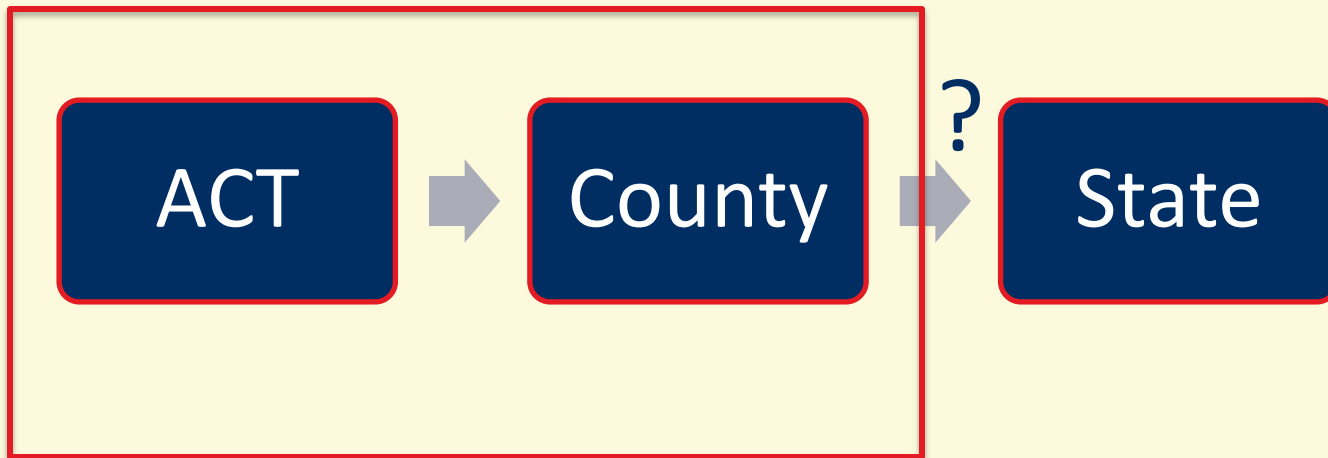
# What are Certified Work Ready Communities?

- An **'eco-system'** for community-based economic development that enables:
  - Business and industry easily hire the foundational skills needed for a productive workforce
  - Individuals understand what skills are required by employers – and how to prepare themselves for success
  - Policy makers, community leaders and educators to measure and close the skill gaps and build career pathways that help both individuals and industry thrive
  - Economic developers to use an on-demand reporting tool that quantifies the skill level of their workforce
- Based on the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), a portable, industry-recognized, evidence-based workforce skill credential

# ACT to State to County Approach

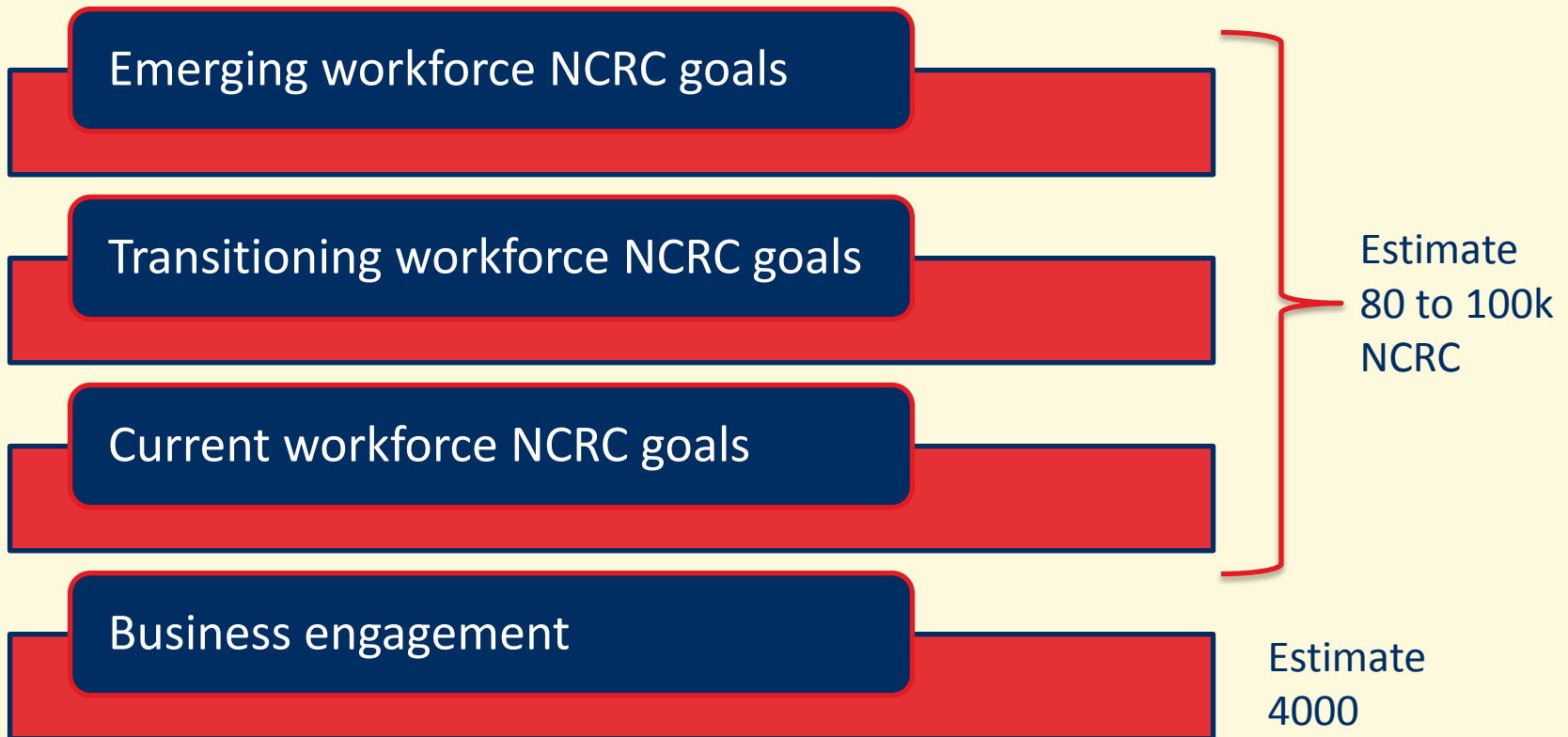


# New initiative: Bright Spots

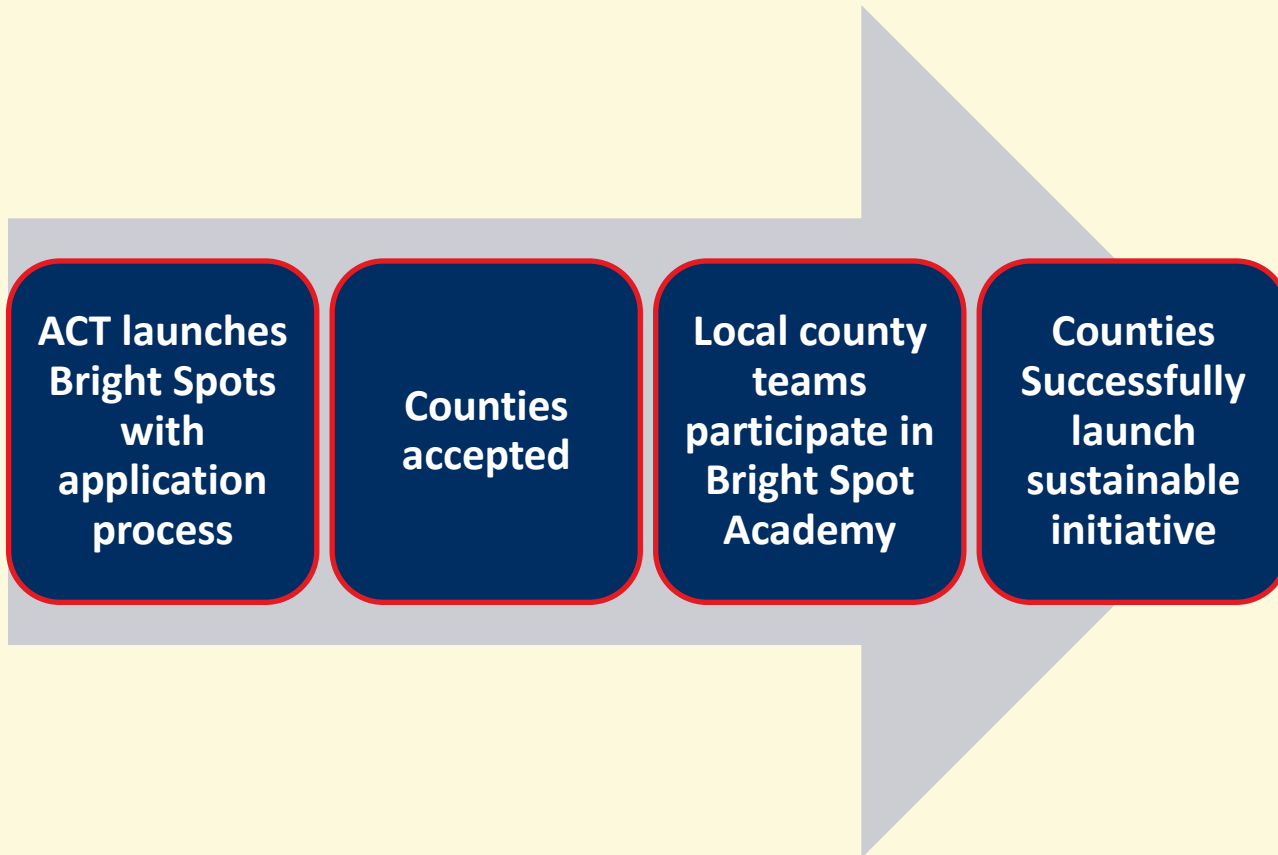


Tentative launch  
June 2013

# Common Thread? Common Criteria

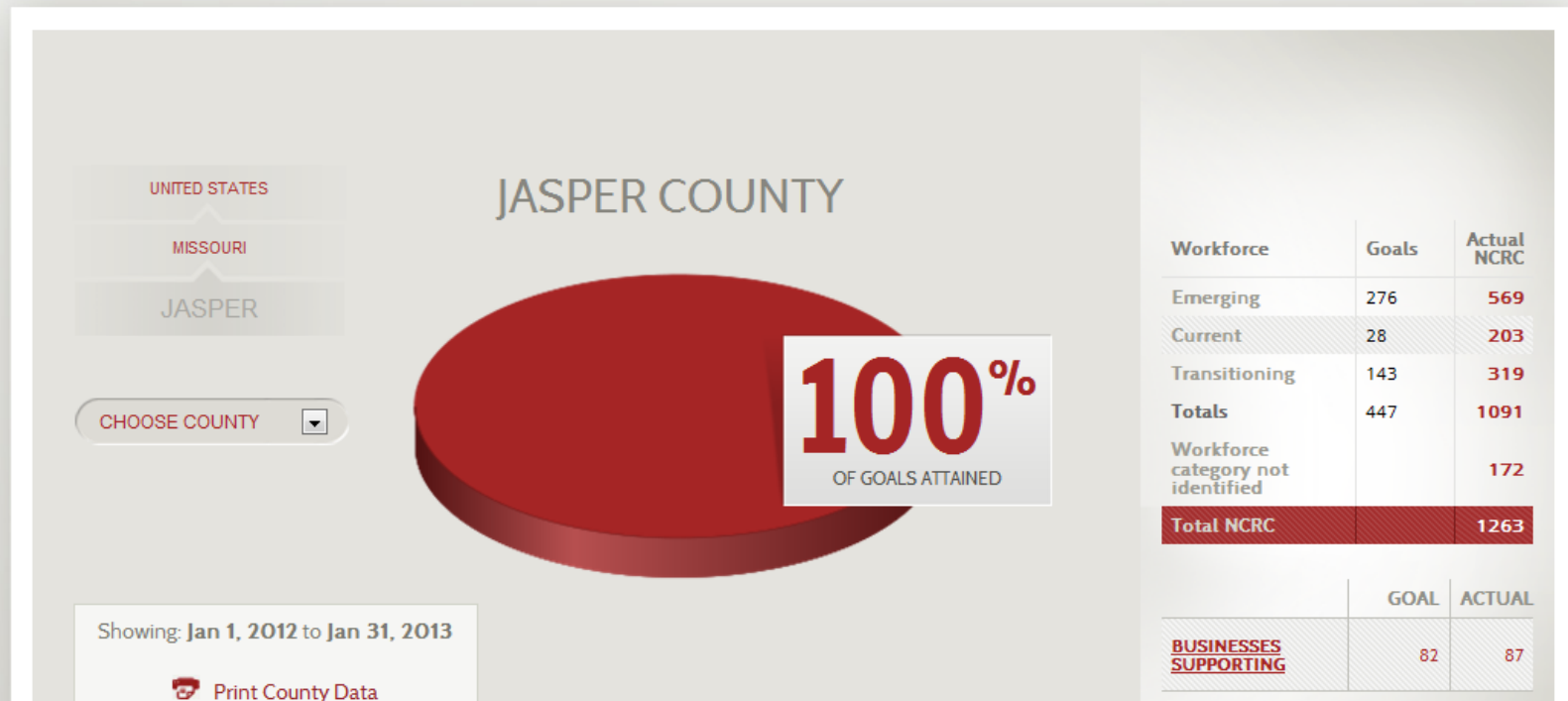


# How would it work?





# What are the expected results?



# What is the commitment?

- County convenes a team of leaders from economic development, chamber/lead business organization, community college, workforce development, K12
- County teams commit to building a framework for counties to set, achieve and maintain county initiative
- Designated county team participate in Bright Spots Academy
- County team works with ACT to build a framework to link, align and match their workforce development system based upon ACT CWRC common criteria
  - Public launch of initiative
  - Achieve results

# What is the cost?

- What does ACT bring?
  - Funds the Bright Spot Academy
  - Manages data and progress
  - Provides tools to support initiative
  - Measure Return on Investment via surveys
- What do counties bring?
  - Commit to building, launching and maintain county based initiative
  - ACT Work Readiness tools
  - Communication plan

# Secrets to Success!

- An engaged team!
- Leadership
- Project manager
- Regular county meetings
- Engagement in ACT
- Business champions
- Going public with launch
- Leveraging and using data

## What people are saying ---

***"Our nation is facing a tremendous skills gap that threatens to stifle economic growth and prosperity. Through its Certified Work Ready Communities initiative, ACT has emerged as a thought leader in measuring and closing the skills gap one community at a time."***

**Lenny Mendonca**  
**Principal, McKinsey and Co.**

## What others are saying --

*“Workforce development is vitally important for local, regional and state economic development -- and indeed, ensuring a pipeline of highly skilled workers is crucial for our national economy. But closing the skills gap happens one community at a time, and I'm gratified to see state leaders partnering with ACT on the Certified Work Ready Communities initiative, an effort that will ultimately improve lives, communities and economies across the country.”*

**Hartley Powell, Principle  
KPMG**

Thank you!  
[www.workreadycommunities.org](http://www.workreadycommunities.org)

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