

Work Ready Certification Overview



The Workforce and Education Development Alliance sanctioned by the Thomaston-Upson Chamber of Commerce is spearheading the effort to have Upson County earn the designation of a Certified Work Ready Community.

Kris Thomas, Vice President of the Chamber's Economic Development Division, is team leader for the Georgia Certified Work Ready Initiative in Upson County.

The Georgia Certified Work Ready Initiative involves all of the resources available in Upson County including Flint River Technical College and the local Thomaston-Upson County School System. This year for the first time, all Upson-Lee High School seniors involved with the Youth Apprenticeship Program and DCT will be given the skills assessment tests as a part of the criteria for both programs. Each senior tested will receive a Georgia Work Ready Initiative skills certificate enabling them to enter the work force with a certifiable skill.

The Georgia Certified Work Ready initiative 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. This workforce development initiative assesses the "real world" skills of Georgia's workers, provides valuable job training and helps companies reliably match the right people with the right jobs.

Work Ready Certification

Through the Work Ready initiative, job seekers as well as workers currently employed in Georgia can pursue a Work Ready Certificate to help them better market their skills to current and future employers. As part of the certification process, individuals complete an assessment that utilizes the nationally accredited WorkKeys® assessment system developed by ACT to measure their core skills and work habits. Participating individuals then receive a Work Ready Certificate that indicates their level of work readiness based on their performance.

Core skills assessment measures skills in applied mathematics, reading for information and locating information, three skills that are highly important to the majority of jobs in the workplace.

Work habits assessment measures work-related attitudes and behaviors in areas that are trainable and coachable such as carefulness, cooperation, discipline and drive.

Work Ready Certification Benefits

Work Ready measures skills that employers consider essential to success on the job. Having a skills credential that is locally and nationally recognized facilitates job placement, retention and advancement. This assessment and certification process provides Georgians with an objective view of their talents and areas that need to be improved in order to maximize their chances of having a successful career. Other advantages include:

- Building confidence that personal skills meet the needs of local employers
- Ranking above other job applicants who have not demonstrated needed skills
- Developing a better understanding of employers' requirements for job performance
- Determining skill improvements and training opportunities
- Realizing opportunities for career advancement and promotions
- Demonstrating on a resume an understanding of the skills employers need

Work Ready Certification Process

Obtaining a Work Ready Certificate is free and easy. Once an individual has made the decision to pursue a Work Ready Certificate, there are three simple steps they can take to complete the process:

1. Visit www.gaworkready.com and identify a location convenient to complete the free assessment. Assessments are offered through the state's 33 technical colleges of the Department of Technical and Adult Education and two Board of Regents schools with technical college divisions.
2. Review the online schedule at your technical college and plan to take the Work Ready assessments. There are three components to the Work Ready Certification and each assessment takes approximately 50 minutes for a total time of about three hours.
3. Use the Work Ready Certificate to demonstrate to potential employers that you are "work ready."

Work Ready Certificate Skill Levels

The Georgia Work Ready initiative uses assessment results to award certificates in four categories:

Platinum Level: Signifies an individual has scored at least a level 6 in each of the three core areas and has the necessary skills for 99 percent of the jobs in the WorkKeys database.

Gold Level: Signifies an individual has scored at least a level 5 in each of the three core areas and has the necessary skills for 90 percent of the jobs in the WorkKeys database.

Silver Level: Signifies an individual has scored at least a level 4 in each of the three core areas and has the necessary skills for 65 percent of the jobs in the WorkKeys database.

Bronze Level: Signifies that an individual has scored at least a level 3 in each of the three core areas and has the necessary skills for 35 percent of the jobs in the WorkKeys database.

For individuals who want to improve their scores and gain a higher-level certificate, free online gap training is available through the technical colleges to help them accomplish their goals.

For more information on the Georgia Work Ready Initiative certification process and test schedules in Upson County please contact **Terry Kinard at Flint River Technical College, 706-646-6226.**