



Legislative Report for HB 2353 Revised (2012-2013) National Career Readiness Certificate Program

December 1, 2013

Section 5 of HB 2353 requires the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) to provide data and recommendations regarding the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) program. This report provides 1) the number of students enrolled in an Oregon community college who utilized the services provided by the NCRC program during the 2010-2011 academic year and 2) recommendations for improving the NCRC program.

Background

Certified Work Ready Communities (CWRC) is an overarching strategy of Governor Kitzhaber and the Oregon Workforce Investment Board (OWIB) to enable Oregon's communities to demonstrate the skilled workforce necessary for companies to locate and prosper here. Ongoing support of the Oregon CWRC initiative is critical, as it provides an independent endorsement of the skill level of the workforce and the community's ability to meet business growth demands.

A significant component of CWRC is the Oregon National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). The NCRC is a valuable, portable certificate that verifies three foundational workplace skills: Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, and Locating Information. Through certification by earning an NCRC, workers can demonstrate they have the foundational skills to succeed in and grow with the companies in their communities. It helps job applicants stand out from the crowd and assures employers that applicants have the foundational skills needed to be successful on the job.

Progress to Date

As a critical tool of the CWRC initiative, over 27,000 Oregonians have earned an NCRC as counties work toward earning their Oregon Work Ready certification. Through the work of the local staff in the WorkSource Oregon Centers, more than 1,200 Oregon employers have signed a letter of commitment stating they prefer the NCRC in their hiring and recruitment practices.

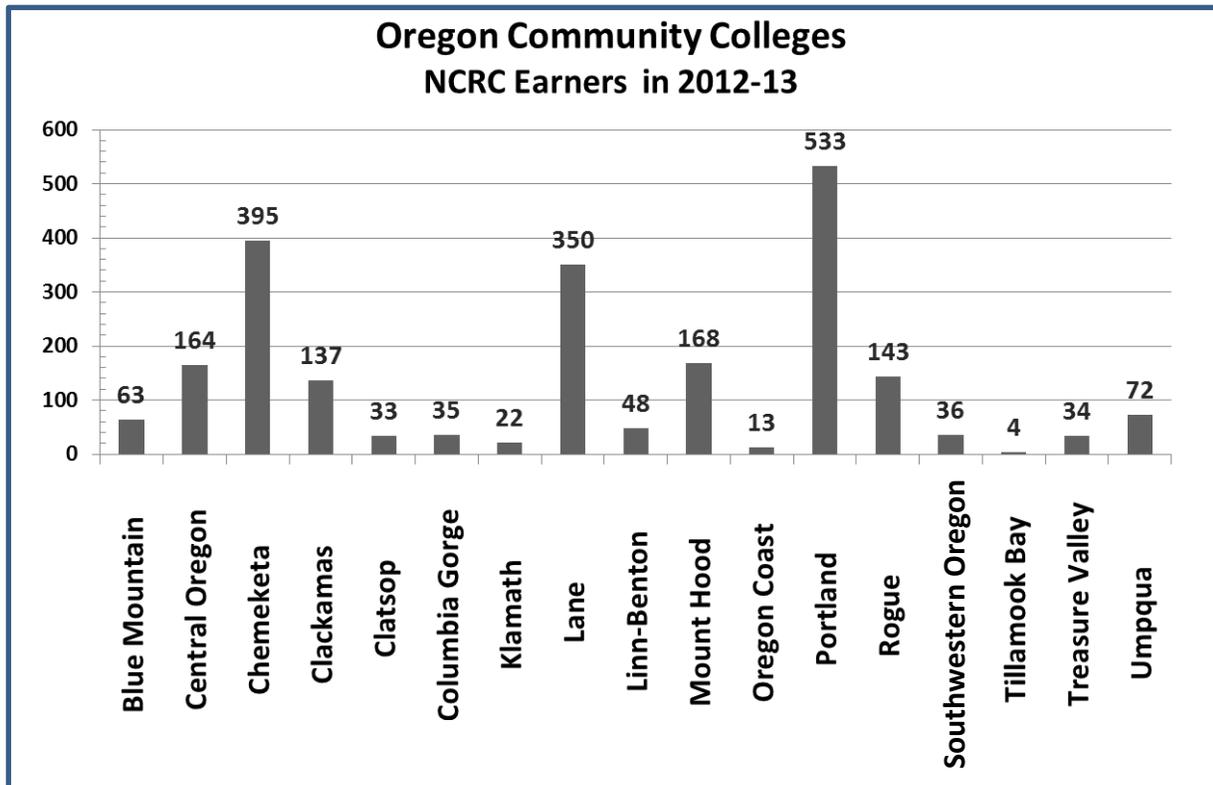
Moving Forward in 2014

CCWD is actively pursuing efforts to expand the initiative with educational stakeholders in the following ways:

- Implement a process to award college credit for the NCRC via an endorsement from the American Council on Education (ACE);
- Connect the NCRC to Adult Basic Education and GED programs;
- Integrate into Oregon Youth Conservation Corps alternative education programs;
- Partner with high schools, alternative youth programs, Educational Service Districts, and Career Technical Education programs; and
- Expand the number of alternate partner testing sites.

Student Engagement

Of the 8,117 individuals who earned an NCRC during the 2012-2013 academic year, 2,250 were enrolled in an Oregon community college. The graph below shows student enrollment by college:



Sources: OCCURS and ACT RegiSTAR

Funding Status

The NCRC program was formerly funded entirely with federal Workforce Investment Act resources; due to on-going federal budget reductions, those resources are no longer available. The 2013 Oregon Legislature allocated funds for a workforce initiative through HB 5019. This legislation included funding for the Certified Work Ready Communities initiative, the NCRC and associated preparatory online testing and courseware.

Recommendations

- 1) Advocate for the continued success of Certified Work Ready Communities initiatives in your local legislative district as we move forward into 2014.
- 2) Continue to fund Oregon's Certified Work Ready Communities initiative.

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