



What is the Florida Ready to Work Certification Program?

The 2006 Florida Legislature created the Florida Ready to Work Certification Program.¹ The purpose of the program is to enhance the workplace skills of Florida residents so that they are better prepared for successful employment in specific occupations.² The program offers a student the opportunity to earn a Ready to Work (RTW) Credential, which signifies that he or she has the fundamental skills necessary to enter the workforce.³

The program is funded by the Florida Legislature and administered by the Division of Career and Adult Education within the Florida Department of Education (DOE) in cooperation with the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI). The state has contracted with Worldwide Interactive Network (WIN) and the nationally recognized ACT® WorkKeys program. WIN provides the web-based delivery system, which includes the online pre-diagnostic assessment and training courseware, career database, and other program support. ACT provides the assessment and credential materials, while qualified sites provide the on-site testing.⁴ The program is marketed to businesses, which are encouraged to utilize the RTW Credential as part of their recruitment and hiring practices.⁵

What are the components of the Florida Ready to Work Certification Program?

The program must be composed of:

- ❖ A comprehensive identification of workplace skills for each occupation identified for inclusion in the program by AWI and DOE.
- ❖ A preinstructional assessment that delineates the student's mastery level on the specific workplace skills identified for that occupation.
- ❖ A targeted instructional program limited to those identified workplace skills in which the student is not proficient as measured by the preinstructional assessment. Instruction must utilize a web-based program and be customized to meet identified specific needs of local employers.

¹ Section 35, ch. 2006-74, L.O.F.

² Section 1004.99(1), F.S.

³ Florida Ready To Work, *Frequently Asked Questions*, <http://www.floridareadytowork.com/faq/> (last visited July 12, 2010).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Florida Ready To Work, *Employers*, <http://www.floridareadytowork.com/employers/> (last visited July 12, 2010).

- ❖ A RTW Credential and portfolio awarded to a student upon successful completion of the instruction. Each portfolio must delineate the skills demonstrated by the student as evidence of the student's preparation for employment.⁶

Who may participate in the Florida Ready to Work Certification Program and where is it offered?

The program may be conducted in public middle and high schools, Florida College System (FCS) institutions, technical centers, one-stop career centers, vocational rehabilitation centers, and Department of Juvenile Justice educational facilities. The program may be made available to other entities that provide job training.⁷ The program is open to Florida students and there is no cost for participation.⁸

As of May 2010, there are 552 assessment sites at the following locations:⁹

FCS Institutions	20
Private Schools/Colleges	2
Charter Schools	9
High Schools	306
Public Technical Centers	31
Juvenile Justice Programs	50
Adult Education Sites	37
State University Sites	1
Regional Workforce Boards	32
Community Based Organizations	17
Department of Corrections Programs	12
Employers	32
Other Sites	3
Total Assessments Sites	552

How is a Ready to Work Credential earned?

To earn a RTW Credential, a student must:

- ❖ Sign up at a participating assessment center and complete the on-line pre-instructional assessment to determine his or her mastery level.
- ❖ Enroll in self-paced tutorial course work, if needed.

⁶ Section 1004.99(3), F.S.

⁷ Section 1004.99(2), F.S.

⁸ Florida Ready To Work, *Frequently Asked Questions*, <http://www.floridareadytowork.com/faq/> (last visited July 12, 2010).

⁹ Florida Ready To Work Progress Report, *Summary – By Implementation Partner Type* (May 31, 2010) available at <https://admin.myfloridareadytowork.com/xls/FRWProgressreport.xls>.

- ❖ Successfully pass three WorkKeys assessments in Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information or other assessments of comparable rigor.¹⁰

Each assessment is scored on a scale from three to seven.¹¹ Higher scores represent greater ability to perform more complex skills. The three levels of the RTW Credential are:

- ❖ Bronze – requires a minimum score of three or above on each of the three assessments.
- ❖ Silver – requires a minimum score of four or above on each of the three assessments.
- ❖ Gold – requires a minimum score of five or above on each of the three assessments.

Each standard high school diploma must include a designation for the RTW Credential if it has been earned by the student.¹²

How many Ready to Work Credentials have been awarded?

As of May 2010, the total number of RTW Credentials awarded is 85,447.¹³

Gold Credentials Awarded to Date	16,069
Silver Credentials Awarded to Date	47,110
Bronze Credentials Awarded to Date	22,268
Total Credentials Awarded to Date	85,447

The cumulative number of credentials awarded by each group is as follows:¹⁴

High Schools	55,907
Regional Workforce Boards	13,639
Public Technical Centers	7,880
FCS Institutions	688
Department of Corrections Programs	334
State University Sites	207
Dept. of Juvenile Justice Programs	926
Community Based Organizations	1,342
Private Schools/Colleges	35
Charter Schools	968
Employers	1,644
Adult Education	1,813
Other	64
Total	85,447

¹⁰ Section 1004.99(4), F.S.; see also Florida Ready To Work, *Frequently Asked Questions*, <http://www.floridareadytowork.com/faq/> (last visited July 12, 2010).

¹¹ Section 1004.99(4), F.S. Each assessment may be completed in one hour. The assessments are offered online but must be proctored and taken at a certified ready to Work (RTW) Assessment Center. Florida Ready To Work, *Frequently Asked Questions*, <http://www.floridareadytowork.com/faq/> (last visited July 12, 2010).

¹² Section 1003.4285(4), F.S.

¹³ Florida Ready To Work Progress Report, *Summary – By Implementation Partner Type* (May 31, 2010) available at <https://admin.myfloridareadytowork.com/xls/FRWProgressreport.xls>.

¹⁴ *Id.*

How will a Ready to Work Credential benefit business partners?

The credential will demonstrate to current and future employers that students have the skills to meet employment expectations. When a job applicant possesses a credential, an employer can be more confident that the applicant has the skills necessary for successful job performance.

Additionally, the credential ensures that students have the skills necessary to enter college or the workforce based on objective, standardized skill assessments that are aligned to FCAT objectives.¹⁵

How is the Ready to Work Certification Program funded?

The program is funded by the Legislature. There is no cost to students, job seekers, employers, schools, or other partners to participate in the program. For FY 2010-11, the General Appropriations Act provides \$5,300,000 to DOE to operate the program.¹⁶

Where can I get additional information?

Florida Department of Education

Division of Career and Adult Education

(850) 245-9047 (assessment site information and assistance)

<http://www.fldoe.org/ReadyToWork/default.asp>

1-877-444-4505 or helpdesk@floridareadytowork.com (student or job applicant questions)

<http://www.floridareadytowork.com>

Florida House of Representatives

Education Policy Council

(850) 488-7451

<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov>

¹⁵ Florida Ready To Work, *Frequently Asked Questions*, <http://www.floridareadytowork.com/faq/> (last visited July 12, 2010).

¹⁶ Specific Appropriation 111, s. 2, ch. 2010-152, L.O.F. Up to 20 percent of the appropriation may be used for assessments, stipends, outreach, credentialing, and DOE administration. The balance of the appropriation is provided for curriculum and implementation services. To maximize the state's investment in the program and minimize disruption of program services, DOE must enter into a contract with the current RTW provider selected by competitive procurement in the 2006-07 FY. Public schools, Florida College System institutions, area technical centers, and business/employers must have first priority for use of assessments and curriculum. *Id.*