

Work certification — something good for job seekers and employers

Despite today's economy, we continue to hear from area employers about the shortage of qualified job candidates. To meet our goal of connecting qualified workers to area employers, the Racine County Workforce Development Center has launched two separate work readiness credentialing initiatives.

These two work readiness certificates are the National Career Readiness Certificate, offered by the ACT organization and the Certificate of Effective Workplace Behaviors, offered by Learning Resources Inc. The NCRC covers skills in the areas of reading, applied mathematics and locating information. The LRI certificate measures soft skills such as integrity, responsibility, self-esteem, self-management and sociability/team work. Together, these certificates help a potential employer know how well the applicant will fit the company's needs as well as its culture.

More and more employers are requiring these credentials of applicants, so if you are looking for a job, it may be a good idea to see about getting yours now. There is no cost to job seekers to do the work necessary to become credentialed, although there are time commitments. The certificates carry an



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added plus for job seekers — because they are issued by national organizations, they are portable. If you move, your certificate will be recognized in other states.

Is getting these certificates worthwhile? We have positive responses from both job seekers and employers that indicate that it certainly is.

Jolene Verwey was a job-seeking member of the ProTech, a professional technical networking group that meets every Monday at the WDC. Jolene earned her NCRC while searching for employment.

"Preparing for the WorkKeys program was a great experience, especially working to update my skill set," Verwey said. "I listed the NCRC on my résumé so employers could see what level of skills I had to place me in the best job." Jolene is now employed and credits obtaining her NCRC certification as one of the reasons her résumé stood out from the pool of job applicants.

CalStar is a new manufacturer in Racine. The company utilized both work readiness products to assist in their hiring process. All CalStar hires were assessed and the company selected the best candidates based on assessment results, interviews and references. Mike Talischek, director of manufacturing, said. "The tools were really helpful. They provided a great filter. The integrity portion of the LRI (soft skills test) was key in selecting candidates for positions."

Talischek also said that as a result of using both assessment products to assess their work force, "there were very few surprises. It was a huge timesaver, especially at this phase where we're really starting this from the ground up."

If you are a job seeker and would like to learn more about this free program to upgrade your skills and attractiveness to employers, contact Leticia Guajardo at the WDC. at (262) 638-6429 or at: Leticia.Guajardo@goracine.org

If you are an employer interested in learning more about this and other free and fee-based assessment products that will enhance your ability to find employees contact Jane Kurylo at the WDC. She can be reached at (262) 638-6603 or at: Jane.Kurylo@goracine.org