



Commonwealth of Virginia *Office of Governor Terry McAuliffe*

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Office of the Governor

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Governor McAuliffe Announces Martinsville Named Virginia's Fourth Certified Work Ready Community

MARTINSVILLE – Governor Terry McAuliffe today announced that the City of Martinsville has been designated as the Commonwealth's fourth Certified Work Ready Community (CWRC). The nationally recognized designation, conferred by the Commonwealth of Virginia and American College Testing (ACT), is targeted at attracting new businesses and jobs to Martinsville, in addition to strengthening the skill sets of the region's high school students, job seekers, and incumbent workers.

"I applaud the City of Martinsville for leading the way in workforce development and setting itself apart in this competitive global economy," **said Governor McAuliffe**. "Training workers for the jobs of the 21st century is good for business, good for communities, and good for our efforts to build a new Virginia economy. The people of Martinsville should be proud of the progress their community is making in this critical area."

"Workforce readiness is the most important asset any community can prioritize to position itself for economic growth and job creation in the 21st century," **said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Todd Haymore**. "I congratulate Martinsville for achieving this milestone and look forward to working with them to highlight this achievement and encourage other communities to become certified as work ready."

More than 55 regional employers, educational institutions, and workforce development organizations supported the City of Martinsville's efforts to achieve this national certification. To become certified, a county must achieve benchmarks in three areas of performance: high school graduation rate, number of National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) credentials attained in the county, and number of employers

recognizing the NCRC. Martinsville companies report that knowing a job candidate has demonstrated foundational workplace skills expedites the hiring process.

“The designation of a Certified Work Ready Community allows existing and prospective employers to recognize that our workforce has the skills needed for them to locate and expand in Southern Virginia,” **said Amanda C. Witt, President of the Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce.** “This initiative has allowed us to work collaboratively with many different sectors in our community to create the end result of a workforce matched to available jobs in our community that align with their skills levels.”

“Today’s achievement by Martinsville City demonstrates to our existing companies, as well as prospective employers, that we have a trainable workforce with the foundational skills to compete,” **added Dr. Julie Brown, Program Director, Dan River Region Collaborative (DRCC).** “We are one step closer to having a significant portion of southern Virginia become a Certified Work Ready Community. When we work together as a region, great things are possible.”

CWRC is a voluntary initiative guided by key community leaders, including: local elected officials, economic development teams, business leaders, chambers of commerce, educators, and workforce development agencies. At the core of the National Work Ready Communities initiative is the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™ (ACT NCRC®). Since January 2006, more than 2.75 million Americans have earned an ACT NCRC®. This national, portable credential includes three essential workplace skill categories: applied math, reading for information, and locating information. The NCRC credential is administered in the City of Martinsville by Patrick Henry Community College with multiple agencies providing referrals for assessments.

“Martinsville’s workforce has been a key asset for our city as we recruit new businesses and support the expansion of our existing businesses,” **stated Gene Teague, Mayor of the City of Martinsville.** “Becoming a Certified Work Ready Community communicates that our workforce has the foundational skills that employers need to be competitive and profitable in today’s global economy.”

Three years ago, *Site Selection Magazine* added the number of National Career Readiness Certificates per 1,000 residents as one of three criteria used in its tabulations for its annual *Top Ten Competitive States* report. Virginia tied with South Carolina for 2nd place in the magazine’s 2017 annual state workforce development rankings, which provide a general sense of which states in a given region are devoting sufficient or superior resources to preparing their workforce for current and future employment.

In addition to Martinsville, Henry County, Halifax County, and Pittsylvania County have been certified as National Work Ready Communities. Two neighboring southern Virginia localities are on track to become CWRCs within the next two months, including Patrick County and the City of Danville. In addition, Greensville County and the City of Emporia have launched NCWRC initiatives and six additional localities in GO Virginia’s Region 3 will begin issuing NCRCs this summer.

For more information about the DRRC or the region’s CWRC initiative, visit <http://www.danriverrc.org/> or contact Dr. Julie Brown at Julie.brown@ialr.org.

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