

WorkKeys Assessment Project Questions (Q) & Answers (A)

Q1: What is the main goal or purpose in issuing the WorkKeys funding?

A1: The primary purpose for the WorkKeys funding is to create a pool of qualified job seekers in our One-Stop system and to assist employers with matching these qualified applicants with their available jobs.

Q2: I am a One-Stop Supervisor with ODJFS. Regarding WorkKeys, when the local One Stop Systems receive the dollars to refer clients to organizations in our area administering WorkKeys, can any partner agency use these funds, including ODJFS, or is it just limited to WIA eligible participants?

A2: The WorkKeys funding can only be used to assess dislocated workers, UC claimants and Veterans who are registered in SCOTI WIA or SCOTI LE.

The WorkKeys funding will be sent to each WIA Area to serve clients in the One-Stop system or other eligible clients. The WIA Area is responsible for administering these funds, including authorizing and paying for the assessments.

We encourage all partner agencies to integrate this assessment service into their One-Stop operations.

Q3: Can WorkKeys testing be done at the One-Stop?

A3: Yes, WorkKeys assessment testing can be provided at the One-Stop through collaboration with the Adult education partners. Currently, the WorkKeys testing is being offered through a number of colleges, school systems, and vocational schools.

One-Stop Operators and WIA Areas should talk with their education partners to determine an implementation plan that best works for the WIA Area.

Q4: Will OWD pay for training because of the WorkKeys testing? In other words, can remediation training be paid for with this WorkKeys funding?

A4: OWD has made a commitment to fund only WorkKeys assessment testing for eligible clients registered in SCOTI as a Dislocated Worker, Veteran, or UC Claimant.

The State is providing funding from Rapid Response funds for the WorkKeys project. These funds are not intended to pay for remediation training for clients. Any remediation training will need to be funded out of other funding streams. This is how other partners within the One-Stop system can participate and dedicate additional resources.

Q5: Does the WIA Area have to procure the WorkKeys assessments?

A5: WIA Areas do not have to conduct procurement because ODJFS is providing funds specifically and only to pay for WorkKeys assessments.

Q6: If a person is eligible for a Career Advancement Account (CAA), are they still eligible to receive WorkKeys Assessments?

A6: Absolutely. In fact, we strongly encourage integration of both CAA and WorkKeys.

Q7: Will there be a campaign to educate employers of the benefits of WorkKeys assessments and the real earning/benefit of the Career Readiness Credential.

A7: The Governor's Workforce Policy Board passed a resolution to dedicate over \$12 million dollars over 3 years to the WorkKeys effort. Part of these funds will be used for an outreach plan to Ohio Employers.

Q8: Will funds be built-in for transportation?

A8: The State is utilizing Rapid Response funds to support this WorkKeys initiative and therefore the funds are only to be used for assessment testing. These funds cannot be used to pay for transportation.

You may enroll eligible clients in WIA and provide supportive services to address this issue. However, you should take into consideration all suitability factors as necessary prior to enrolling the client in WIA. The fact that the client is not able to provide his/her own transportation to a testing site could be an indication that the individual may have certain barriers to employment, i.e. transportation, etc. prior to being employable.

Q9: What costs, training, materials, etc. are involved for a site to become an official WorkKeys testing site?

A9: Please contact the licensed ACT test center in your area to obtain information as it relates to the cost of becoming a satellite testing center. A list of licensed ACT test centers can be found at <http://www.act.org/workkeys/centers.html> under Ohio.

Q10: What is the minimum number of clients needed to schedule testing on-site at the One-Stop Center?

A10: The minimum and maximum number of clients needed to provide group testing on-site might vary from one test center to another. Please contact the licensed ACT test centers in your area directly for response to this question.

Q11: How will this project / program be sold to employers?

A11: WorkKeys assessment scores only measure the personal and foundational skills and potential of individuals. The National Career Readiness certificate validates the skill level of individuals using a national standard that most employers nationwide value and recognize. This WorkKeys assessment does not gauge an individual's work ethic, character or behavior.

Employers/One-Stops will still need to conduct interviews, background screens and employment history checks prior to hiring/referrals of an individual, who possesses Gold, Silver or Bronze standards. WorkKeys is another tool to help the employer/one-stop assess the skill potential of a candidate.

Q12: Can other assessment tests besides WorkKeys be purchased with the allocation?

A12: No, this funding is only to be used on WorkKeys assessments.

Q13: Can other vendors be used besides the 40 on the list that was sent out?

A13: Yes, other test sites can be used as long as they are recognized as a licensed test center for ACT WorkKeys assessments. Additionally, they will need to support and utilize the SCOTI (the State reporting system) for intake and information gathering.

Q14: Does the price for WorkKeys testing vary from vendor to vendor? Should the Area simply select the cheapest?

A14: Yes, price may vary slightly from vendor to vendor based on the packaged services they offer. The Area should select vendors based on customer choice (including travel distance) and services.

However, the Ohio Department of Education has negotiated a standardized cost of \$65 for the three (3) assessments associated with the National Career Readiness certificate with all of the ACT's licensed test sites.

Q15: The 2/9/07 Memo stated (bottom of Page 2) that guidance on SCOTI registration and information requirements will be made available. Is this available?

A15: SCOTI will be modified to accommodate the upload of WorkKeys test scores directly from ACT. However, in order for this process to be successful, customers need to have an existing file in SCOTI. For instructions on how to enter a customer into SCOTI LE, please contact the SCOTI help desk at 1-888-2WORK411 (1-888-296-7541) or at SCOTI-HELP-DESK@odjfs.state.oh.us

Q16: When will systems receive their allocation letters?

A16: Allocation letters will be sent only to the Areas and they will be mailed out on by no later than February 28, 2007.

Q17: When and how will allocations be determined for Area 7 sub-systems?

A17: If you are a part of Area 7, please contact Area 7 or visit www.area7workforce.org to obtain information regarding how these allocations will be determined.

Q18: Will an area sub-system have to wait for 70% of the entire Area 7 allocation to be exhausted before they apply for additional funds?

A18: Yes, please contact Area 7 for details regarding the process to apply for additional funds once your initial allocation has been expended. You may also visit www.area7workforce.org to obtain additional information.

Q19: The 2/9/07 Memo stated that OWD would develop a standardized application to facilitate the process of applying for additional funds. Is this available?

A19: The application will be made available and published prior to June, 2007.

Q20: What are some things that the Areas need to consider to implement the use of WorkKeys?

A20: Areas will need to take into consideration the following factors:

- Location of licensed Test Centers in relation to One-Stops
- Cost of Assessments (price comparison among licensed providers)
- Type of Assessment (computer or paper) based on client need
- Efficient payment process for assessments to ensure client services are uninterrupted
- Common understanding between partners and staff on how WorkKeys assessments will be tracked. (i.e. referrals, SCOTI, data entry, etc.)

Q21: How is the state handling the actual "credentials" or the NCRC? Are they being distributed directly from ACT, Ohio Workforce Development, WIA, DJFS, or from each local county? Ideally the credential would look the same across the state so employers in any county would recognize an ACT NCRC.

A21: During the second quarter, SCOTI will be modified to accommodate the upload of WorkKeys test scores directly from ACT. Currently, OWD is exploring options to input minimal data into SCOTI. Instructions for this purpose will be published by March 15, 2007.

However, in order for this process to be successful, customers need to have an existing file in SCOTI. For instructions on how to enter a customer into SCOTI LE, please contact the SCOTI help desk at 1-888-2WORK411 (1-888-296-7541) or www.scoti-help-desk@odjfs.state.oh.us

Q22: Can WorkKeys funding be utilized retroactively? In other words, can the WorkKeys allocation be used to pay for costs incurred prior to 3.1.2007?

A22: No, WorkKeys funding cannot be used retroactively. The WorkKeys funding can only be used for assessments rendered on or before the date of your Area allocation letter (2.28.2007). Again, all clients being assessed with this funding need to be registered in SCOTI (see question 15 above for details).

Q23: Can we obtain a list or link to businesses in Ohio that use WorkKeys?

A23: You will need work with your local licensed test centers to obtain a list of businesses and employers that utilize WorkKeys in your area.

Q24: Can the WorkKeys allocation be used for profiling an occupation for an employer. The cost for an occupational profile is approximately \$1500.

A24: No, this WorkKeys allocation issued to the Areas on February 28, 2007 can only be utilized to purchase the WorkKeys assessments.

Q25: In the One-Stop video conference (March 6, 2007), it was mentioned that the standardized cost of all three (3) WorkKeys assessments needed to obtain a "National Career Readiness Certificate" is \$65. Is a local match required for the \$65, similar to the Governor's Workforce Policy Board initiative?

A25: No, a local match is not required for this WorkKeys initiative. You may use your Area's WorkKeys allocation (issued on February 28, 2007) to pay for the entire cost of the assessments administered to eligible clients.

Q26: Can the WorkKeys "National Career Readiness Certificate" meet the requirements for a certificate for performance measures for the WIA program?

A26: The USDOL issued Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 17-05 last March that changed how states recognize credentials and certificates for performance measures for the WIA program.

In Attachment B, which the definition of terms for this guidance letter, certificate is defined as follows:

A certificate is awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation. These technical or occupational skills are based on standards developed or endorsed by employers. Certificates awarded by workforce investment boards are not included in this definition. Work readiness certificates are also not included in this definition...

WorkKeys does not measure technical or occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation. The definition specifically prohibits work readiness certificates.

The WorkKeys "National Career Readiness Certificate" does not meet the requirements to be counted as a certificate for performance measures for WIA.

This definition applies to certificates required for the Youth Attainment of a Degree or Certificate Rate.

The certificate definition replaces the term credential for individuals who have a date of participation that is July 1, 2006 or later.

The performance measures that are affected by this definition change are:

- Adult Employment and Credential Rate
- Dislocated Worker Employment and Credential Rate
- Older Youth Employment and Credential Rate.

Q27: At the last One-Stop Video conference, it was mentioned that ODE was working with ACT to get the National Career Readiness Certificate as a free service. Is there no additional cost to obtain the NCRC?

A27: For a temporary period, the Certificate is being offered without any additional charge by ACT. We are not yet aware of when the ACT offer will end. However, we are currently working with ACT to waive the cost of the NCRC for Ohio for this initiative.

Q28: Where is the NCRC available?

A28: If you use a licensed provider, once they send in the test, the scores are usually posted and received by that provider in 72 hours. Please work with your local provider to determine your notification process, in terms of the job seekers who were assessed.

Q29: Can any of the WorkKeys allocation be spent on marketing?

A29: No, this funding is only to be used on WorkKeys assessments. However, you may contact your local provider to obtain general marketing materials from ACT to promote the WorkKeys assessments.

Q30: Can any portion of the allocation be spent for related administrative costs?

A30: No, this funding is only to be used on WorkKeys assessments.

Q31: What type of initial "eligibility" information / documentation is needed to verify that the individual falls into one of the three categories (Dislocated Worker, Veteran, and UC Claimants)?

A31: Since these individuals need to be in SCOTI Labor Exchange or WIA Core, you can use the SCOTI LE or WIA Core screen printouts as documentation.

In addition to entering individuals into SCOTI, we are requiring that you enter "WK333" in the Local Use One of Local Use Two fields. You may refer to our published "WorkKeys SCOTI Guidance" for details.

Q32: Can local WIA funds be utilized to purchase WorkKeys remediation training?

A32: Yes, you may use local WIA funds to purchase remediation training to assist individuals with increasing their WorkKeys assessment scores. You will need to discuss this with your local providers and partners.

Q33: What levels of skills are typically required in the jobs surveyed nationwide by ACT?

A33: In ACT's national survey of jobs and skill levels, they found the following:
-With a level 3 (Bronze), one can qualify for approximately 35% of the jobs surveyed
-With a level 4 (Silver), one can qualify for approximately 65% of the jobs surveyed
-With a level 5 (Gold), one can qualify for approximately 90% of the jobs surveyed

The bronze, silver and gold levels mentioned above pertain to the National Career Readiness Certificate that tests the skill levels of individuals in three areas: Locating information, Reading for information and Applied Mathematics.

Q34: How long does it take for a client to improve their score at least one level?

A34: It takes approximately 15 – 20 hours of service in remediation training to go up one level in score. However, this may vary based on the individual.

Q35: What are some of the benefits of using WorkKeys from an employer standpoint?

A35: Employers have shared that WorkKeys has been a time and cost saving tool that has enhanced their existing hiring process by making available a pool of qualified applicants. Workkeys in conjunction with the employer's existing HR practices has made the hiring process more efficient. WorkKeys has in some cases reduced the time it takes to fill a vacancy.

You can also access the ACT "WorkKeys" web site at <http://www.act.org/workkeys/case/index.html> to obtain employer case studies and research reports.

Q36: Can the WorkKeys allocation dollars be used to cover the cost of the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)?

A36: Yes, you may utilize the WorkKeys allocation dollars issued by ODJFS, Office of Workforce Development to cover the cost of the NCRC. However, you will need to work with your local ACT test center in order to obtain the printed certificates for \$10 per certificate.