

## OVERVIEW OF THE WORK CERTIFIED™ PROGRAM



The Work Certified™ program was created by employers and benefits both the employer and job seekers in many positive ways. In 1999, the National Skill Standards Board

challenged the Workforce Development Board of the Treasure Coast and the Palm Beach Workforce Board to produce solutions to skill standards. The Boards completed the development team by engaging Palm Beach Community College and Indian River Community College. The Workforce Development Board of the Treasure Coast, earlier, identified “soft” and “basic” skills as the number one recruitment and retention problem for employers and elected to work with local employers to tackle skill standards for work readiness. Employer focus groups were conducted in five counties. These focus groups included diverse types of businesses, education and government. The information from these focus groups was developed into a curriculum that has evolved over the last years into the dynamic program it is today!

This Work Certified™ Program is unique. Our main clients are the business community. This is different than most certification programs, whether not-for-profit, government, or public or private schools. Our training approach is business-driven, and certification is accomplished by participants who have demonstrated that they are truly ready to be responsible, productive employees. Towards that end, this is not a program whose success is based upon the percentage of enrolled students who obtain certification or the average scores obtained by students on the certification test. The success of the program is based upon how well the students perform in their jobs.

The overall Work Certified™ program goal is to teach, verify skills and behaviors that ensure the success of entry-level employees in the workplace. Businesses who hire these skilled and knowledgeable employees are more productive, have less turnover, spend fewer hours teaching basics and more time transacting business. Employees who are “**Work Certified™**” remain employed and are more likely to advance within a business, or obtain a better position at higher pay with another company.



The distinctive curriculum structure, along with the requirements of demonstrated ability of specific skill outcomes, has produced an **employer-focused, employer-driven program** that is understood and embraced by businesses. The Work Certified™ Program establishes skill benchmarks that individuals need to succeed in the workplace. These benchmarks were set and adopted by businesses based on employers’ needs and expectations.

To our knowledge this is the only employer-driven, employer-focused work readiness program in the country. To ensure all required aspects of certification programs were met, the National Skill Standards Board provided guidance throughout the development and implementation of the program. At their meeting in Jacksonville in 2001, the National Skills Standards Board stated, “This is the best program of its type in the country.”