

**STATE OF GEORGIA**  
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

Sonny Perdue  
GOVERNOR

Office of Communications  
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**Governor Perdue Announces Eight New Certified Work Ready Communities**

*Communities Work Together to Boost High School Graduation Rates, Build Skilled Workforce*

ATLANTA – Governor Sonny Perdue today announced eight new Certified Work Ready Communities, a designation showing the county has the skilled workforce that business demands and the educational infrastructure to drive economic growth and prosperity.

“Establishing a path for life-long learning empowers Georgians to improve their skills and take on the challenges of today’s economy,” said Governor Perdue. “By building a strong, well-trained workforce, these communities have taken charge of their futures and are equipped for economic growth and success.”

The eight new Certified Work Ready Communities of Excellence are Bulloch, Camden, Dodge, Early, Houston, Johnson, Troup and Worth counties. These counties represent the fifth group to complete their Work Ready Certificate goals and successfully meet at least the required minimum increase in their county’s public high school graduation rate.

The new Certified Work Ready Communities achieved the following:

- **Bulloch County:** 1,132 Work Ready Certificates earned (33 percent more than goal); increased public high school graduation rate from 73.1 to 81.9 percent
- **Camden County:** 1,002 Work Ready Certificates earned (68 percent more than goal); increased public high school graduation rate from 75 to 82.6 percent
- **Dodge County:** 875 Work Ready Certificates earned (190 percent more than goal); increased public high school graduation rate from 79.9 to 88.8 percent
- **Early County:** 407 Work Ready Certificates earned (56 percent more than goal); increased public high school graduation rate from 68.5 to 79.4 percent
- **Houston County:** 3,220 Work Ready Certificates earned (171 percent more than goal); increased public high school graduation rate from 78.9 to 81 percent
- **Johnson County:** 351 Work Ready Certificates earned (118 percent more than goal); increased public high school graduation rate from 63.9 to 70.1 percent
- **Troup County:** 1,973 Work Ready Certificates earned (153 percent more than goal); increased public high school graduation rate from 73.2 to 76.3 percent
- **Worth County:** 309 Work Ready Certificates earned (24 percent more than goal); increased public high school graduation rate from 58.5 to 71.6 percent

To earn the Certified Work Ready Community designation, counties must demonstrate a commitment to improving public high school graduation rates through a measurable increase, and show a specified percentage of the available and current workforce have obtained Work Ready Certificates.

Each community created a team of economic development, government and education partners to meet the certification criteria. Counties are given three years to reach the goals necessary to earn the designation.

Once counties attain their Certified Work Ready Community goals, they are able to maintain their status by ensuring a small percent of their available workforce continue to earn Work Ready Certificates, engage local businesses to recognize and use Work Ready, and continue to increase their public high school graduation rate until they reach a threshold of 75 percent.

To continue their work, each county will receive a \$10,000 grant. Their Work Ready Community teams will also receive a two-year membership to their local chamber of commerce and a budget for additional Work Ready outreach materials. Counties that are fully certified receive road signs and a seal denoting the year they achieved certification.

Georgia's Work Ready initiative is based on a skills assessment and certification for job seekers and a job profiling system for businesses. By identifying both the needs of business and the available skills of Georgia's workforce, the state can more effectively generate the right talent for the right jobs. The Certified Work Ready Community initiative builds on the assessments and job profiling system to create opportunities for greater economic development.

For more information on the Work Ready initiative please visit the Web site at [www.gaworkready.org](http://www.gaworkready.org)