

National Career Readiness Certificate Pilot Program

August 12, 2025



The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) pilot program was created in July 2024 with the passage of LB631. The legislature appropriated \$500,000 per year for two years to the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) to operate the pilot program. This report highlights the work done in the first year of the pilot program.

The first six months of the pilot program year were spent identifying resources and developing a program to deliver the services. NDCS entered into agreements with Metropolitan Community College (MCC) and Southeast Community College (SCC) to provide the services in multiple facilities. It should be noted that MCC has been delivering NCRC within NDCS facilities for several years prior to the pilot.

The summaries below were provided by MCC and SCC, respectively.

Metropolitan Community College (MCC) partnered with Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) to expand access to the National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC) to the incarcerated population. The NCRC is a portable work credential verifying to potential employers that an individual is work ready and can be the key to the incarcerated and re-entry population attaining employment upon release. Within the first six months, MCC hired two designated team members to administer the NCRC to the incarcerated population, track outcomes and provide follow up service and support at Omaha Correctional Center (OCC), Tecumseh State Correctional Institution (TSCI), Community Corrections Center – Omaha (CCC-O) and Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility (NCYF). MCC will share the responsibility of serving the Work Ethic Camp (WEC) with Southeast Community College. The NCRC assessment has been offered to 155 incarcerated individuals and 97% of those tested received the NCRC.

This Year-to-Date summary highlights Southeast Community College's delivery of contract services for the NCRC program at NDCS facilities. In the first quarter (Jan–Mar 2025), SCC recruited and onboarded staff and developed curriculum for pre-testing, test preparation, and Employability Skills Workshops. During the second quarter (Apr–Jun), SCC registered as an ACT WorkKeys Test Site, completed all required training, procured testing materials, communicated with five correctional facilities, and launched a pilot cohort at Community Corrections Center – Lincoln (CCC-L). In the third quarter (Jul–Sep), SCC expanded services to the Nebraska State Penitentiary (NSP), initiated NICaMS data entry training for staff, and began launching services at NCCW, RTC, and WEC. As of July, SCC has served 46 participants, and ACT has returned seven test scores, all falling within the Bronze to Platinum range.

