

Florida's Workforce System: Building Capacity by Collaboration

State and local collaboration with economic development and other principals in building a world-class workforce continue to keep Florida a national innovator in workforce development. Here are a few of the forward-thinking initiatives coming from the workforce community and our partners this year:

Customized Labor Market Information. Earlier in this fiscal year a competitive funding opportunity initiated by the Workforce Florida High Skills/High Wages Council resulted in grants to fund over 40 customized labor market information projects for the Regional Workforce Boards (RWBs). The projects are for expanded and customized products and services offered by the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) through its Labor Market Statistics program.

The nature of the projects range from vacancy / hiring needs surveys, analysis of targeted industries and occupations, occupational commuting patterns, GIS mapping by education level, to customized new hire employer reporting. More detailed information will be available at www.workforceflorida.com upon the completion of the projects and submission of final reports at the end of August.

Workforce Working Group of the Enterprise Florida Manufacturers Advisory Council. In response to the national and state decline of manufacturing employment—estimated at 1.6 million jobs since 2001 with 35,200 jobs in Florida alone—Enterprise Florida (EFI) has formed the Enterprise Florida Manufacturers Advisory Council (EFMAC). Workforce Florida assisted EFI with the identification of Florida manufacturers to participate on the council and is staffing the Workforce Working Group chaired by Linda Cooke, WFI board member.

The Workforce Working Group has surveyed the EFMAC membership on issues related to existing and future workforce needs and training. The results of the survey will be shared with the High Skills/High Wages Council in early April for consideration in planning for FY04/05 initiatives and subsequently posted at www.workforceflorida.com.

Introduction to Economic Development for Workforce System Leaders. This one-day course was developed by the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) in collaboration with the National Center on Education (NCEE), the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) and the American Chamber of Commerce Researchers Association (ACCRA). WFI anticipates sponsoring the course delivered by two faculty—one an expert in economic development, and one an expert in workforce development—in three regions of the state sometime in April or May. Please check our website for more information or contact Andra Cornelius at: acornelius@workforceflorida.com.