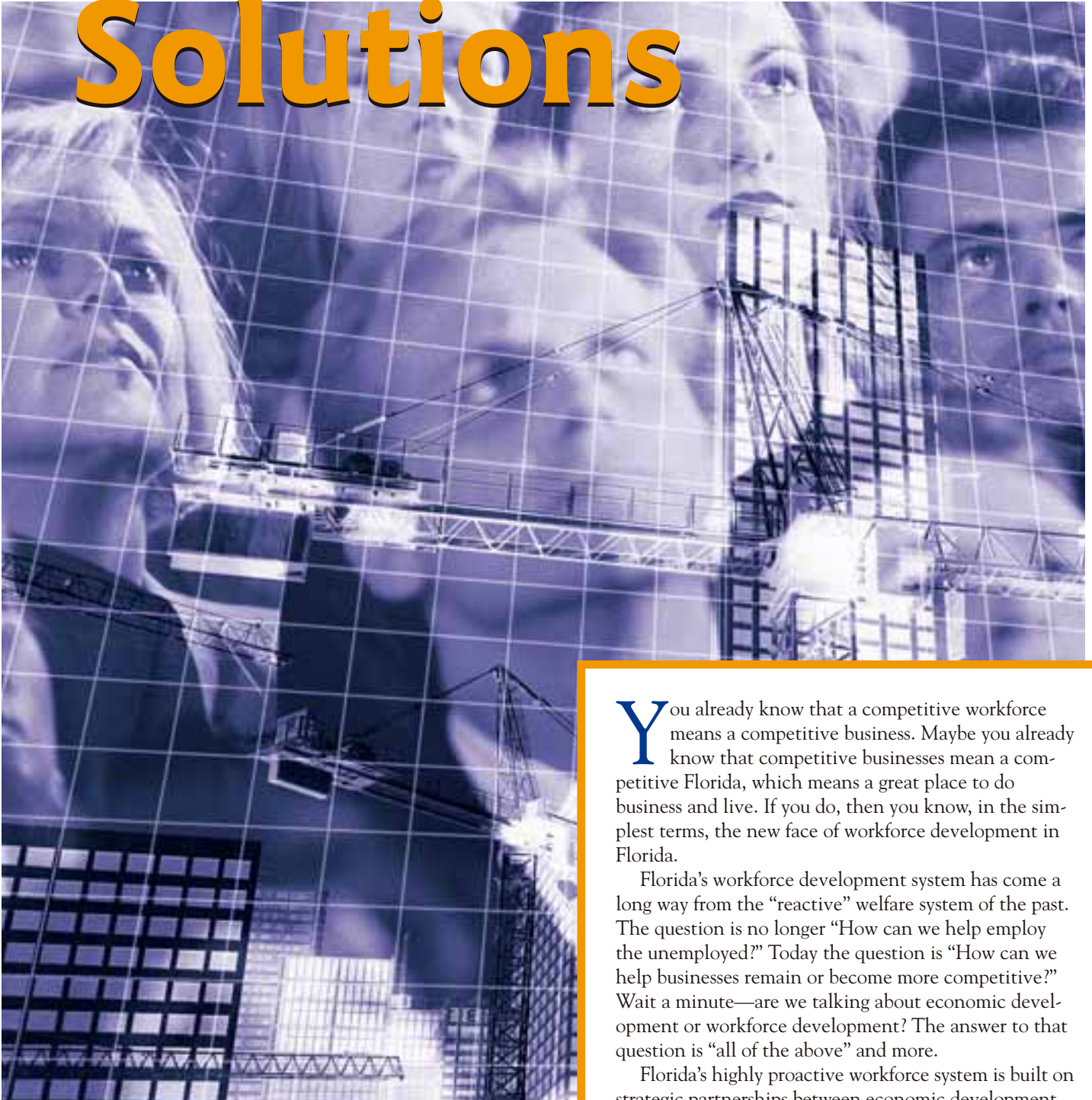


Easy Access to Florida's New Workforce Solutions



You already know that a competitive workforce means a competitive business. Maybe you already know that competitive businesses mean a competitive Florida, which means a great place to do business and live. If you do, then you know, in the simplest terms, the new face of workforce development in Florida.

Florida's workforce development system has come a long way from the "reactive" welfare system of the past. The question is no longer "How can we help employ the unemployed?" Today the question is "How can we help businesses remain or become more competitive?" Wait a minute—are we talking about economic development or workforce development? The answer to that question is "all of the above" and more.

Florida's highly proactive workforce system is built on strategic partnerships between economic development,

Employ Florida *continued*

workforce development, education and businesses at both the state and local levels. A demand-driven approach enables Florida to be responsive to employers' workforce needs in the current economic environment while keeping abreast of future trends and opportunities.

As an HR professional, you need to be on top of changes in your company that may have implications for how many, what type and when employees are needed. Envision a similar scenario but substitute the state of Florida for the company and the workforce system as the HR department. Get the picture?

We Are Just Around the Corner

Florida's workforce system is business-driven and built on partnerships and local control. Across the state, workforce solutions and resources are available to employers through a network of "one-stop" centers affiliated with each other as members of Employ Florida. Local control of the one-stops by Florida's 24 regional workforce boards means that local programs and services address the economic development, business and workforce needs unique to each region. Local affiliation with the statewide Employ Florida network means customers anywhere in the state can quickly identify and locate local services. For the HR professional charged with recruiting, retaining and re-training the company workforce, this translates to a powerful and often untapped resource only a phone call away.

How Can We Help You?

Your local workforce board stands ready to serve as a partner in meeting your workforce needs. Employee recruiting represents a large part of local services and is available at no charge. Available services include electronic job postings that are viewed by thousands of applicants each day while visiting the one stop centers or via the Internet.

Many companies look to Florida's workforce system when they are seeking to diversify their labor force or reach out to special groups of skilled workers, such as transitioning military veterans. Most one-stops offer screening services and assessment tools to help recruiters streamline the process of selecting qualified applicants. This might even include brokering pre-employment services, such as drug and alcohol testing, background checks and more .

Companies can also recruit on site at one or more of the 100 local one-stop centers. Many centers offer space to businesses for job fairs or one-on-one interviews. One-stops will publicize the event and help manage applicant traffic. Industry job fairs at one-stop centers can attract large crowds. In Jacksonville, for example, one career center's half-day event attracts an average of 600 qualified workers each month.

The workforce system is also a source of valuable labor market information. Florida's Agency for Workforce Innovation, a state partner in the Employ Florida network, tracks labor and employment statistics and produces the most comprehensive salary surveys in the state. Labor market intelligence helps companies understand trends and remain competitive in the talent market. Also available to you is technical assistance on federal and state labor laws as well as tax code provisions that encourage employment and training.

State-Level Training Resources Available to Your Company

In addition to services available locally, businesses can get assistance at the state level with employer-specific training needs. The Quick Response Training Program (QRT), administered by Workforce Florida, Florida's workforce policy board, provides grant funding for customized training for new or expanding businesses. Created in 1993, QRT has provided customized training for over 85,000 employees for more than

300 businesses and industries throughout the state. The program has been structured to be flexible and to "respond quickly" to meet the business's training objectives. A local fiscal agent—community college, area technical center or university—is selected and available to help develop or deliver the customized program and to provide assistance in the application process. If the business already has a training program in place, the local training provider will supervise and manage the training program and serve as the fiscal agent for the grant funds.

The Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWT) is another highly popular employer-specific training program administered by Workforce Florida. IWT grants are available to existing businesses in Florida that need to re-train workers. Since its creation in 1999, this program has helped provide customized skills upgrade training for over 23,000 employees for more than 300 businesses throughout the state—many of them small businesses. Employers consistently praise the program for its flexible structure that allows them to choose the training provider and customize the training to meet their training objectives.

Case Study: Scripps Research Institute

Today, Florida's workforce system is focused on increasing high-skill, high-wage jobs and preparing the workforce to fill them.

The return on such an investment not only impacts the individual and the business, but local communities and the state as a whole benefit in many direct and far-reaching ways.

The recruitment of The Scripps Research Institute to Palm Beach County provides a real-time example of Florida's new approach to building a competitive workforce and the tremendous impact it will have in the local region and beyond.

In March of 2003, Workforce Alliance (Region #21, Palm Beach County) formed a relationship with

Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton to address training needs for the biotech industry. There were several biotech firms in the area experiencing moderate growth. This partnership was being initiated to begin a new, proactive approach to prepare local workers for a career in biotechnology, an “if you build it they will come” initiative, to replace those careers being lost in the declining manufacturing industry.

With the announcement by Florida’s Governor, Jeb Bush, on October 9, 2003 that The Scripps Research Institute, located in La Jolla, Calif., had agreed to open a second major research facility in Palm Beach County, the pressure to prepare a qualified and talented pool of employees became a reality. As one of the world’s largest, nonprofit biomedical research organizations, the Scripps Institute is internationally recognized for research in immunology, biology, chemistry, neuroscience, autoimmune and cardiovascular diseases and synthetic vaccine development.

The Washington Economics Group, Inc.’s study projects that Scripps opening a research facility in Palm Beach County is expected to create 6,500 jobs, generate \$1.6 billion in additional income and boost the state’s Gross Domestic Product by \$3.2 billion in the next 15 years. It is anticipated that 40,000 additional jobs will be created as a result of industry clustering around Scripps. Skills upgrading in biotechnology fields can lead to jobs as senior technicians, lab specialists, and research specialists. These positions pay between \$50,000 to \$60,000 annually—a good return-on-investment for Florida and Floridians.

Scripps was faced with the challenge to staff the emerging facility in Florida with a Human Resources Department based in California. To assist them in achieving their goals, Scripps established a partnership with Workforce Alliance in Palm Beach County, Fla. As a member of

the Employ Florida statewide workforce network, Workforce Alliance was able to draw on multiple resources to assist Scripps in their employment needs. This partnership between Workforce and Scripps allows Scripps to have local contacts and assistance in seeking out qualified and skilled employees.

To assist Scripps meet future employment demands, Workforce Alliance combined the needs of Scripps with the foundation of the Biotech project already in development with FAU. The program is designed to upgrade the skill levels of currently employed Biotech employees and retrain individuals with a BS in math or science who have been displaced from transitioning/declining industries for a new career in the emerging Biotechnology industries. The project will establish a Biotech career ladder and curriculum development that will lead to a postgraduate level certificate in Biotechnology and Bioinformatics. This program will also continue development of a BS to MS program in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology through coursework and training in advanced lab techniques. Demand-driven, strategic partnerships,

forward thinking—this is the face of workforce in Florida today.

How Do You Locate Florida’s New Workforce Resources?

Florida’s workforce services are linked together through the Employ Florida network. That means you only need to remember one name—Employ Florida—to find any of the network members. Just call the Employ Florida toll-free number: 1-866-FLA-2345. Or visit www.employflorida.net to locate contact information for local one-stops, regional workforce boards, Workforce Florida, the Agency for Workforce Innovation as well as the many Florida workforce partners. ●

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