



## **Employ Florida Banner Centers Q&A**

### **What is Employ Florida?**

The state workforce system is collectively known as the Employ Florida network. It comprises two state-level partners, Workforce Florida, Inc., and the Agency for Workforce Innovation, as well as 24 Regional Workforce Boards and almost 100 One-Stop Centers. All are focused on strengthening the state's business climate by helping Floridians enter, remain and advance in the workforce by improving their skills.

### **What are Employ Florida Banner Centers?**

The competitive edge of Florida businesses relies heavily on the skills and productivity of their employees. Workforce Florida has awarded grants totaling \$6.2 million to establish 10 leading programs that focus on creating and providing up-to-date training for workers in industries that are critical to sustaining and growing Florida's diverse economy.

Most of the centers are based at Florida community colleges or universities. They engage educational institutions, businesses, and workforce and economic development partners, among others, to provide a focal point for industry-specific skills training. They also serve as clearinghouses for companies needing training, create relevant and rigorous new curricula for training entry-level and advanced workers who need to upgrade their skills, and ensure training and education offered in Florida meets industry standards.

The Employ Florida Banner Center for Career Academies, however, has a slightly different, though complementary, mission. In December, Workforce Florida announced a \$1 million grant to establish the center. The award was given to the Okaloosa County School District CHOICE Institutes. With the grant, Okaloosa Schools will provide technical support to school districts throughout the state wanting to start new career academies or overhaul existing programs; develop standards and accountability measures for career education programs; and research and highlight best practices in career education that serve to help Florida maintain and improve its globally competitive workforce.

Workforce Florida has awarded grants to establish other Banner Centers at Florida Community College at Jacksonville and Brevard Community College (aviation and aerospace); Hillsborough Community College (manufacturing); Indian River Community College (homeland security and defense); Lake City Community College (logistics and distribution); Lake-Sumter Community College (energy); Miami Dade College (financial services); Santa Fe Community College (construction); the University of Florida (biotechnology); and Valencia Community College (health sciences).

### **How are targeted industries chosen?**

The industries are chosen based on the state's strategic plan for economic development, the "Roadmap to Florida's Future." It calls for "cluster" centers that address technical workforce skills in sectors that broaden the economic base. The plan recommends targeting industries

including, but not limited to, aviation and aerospace, distribution and logistics, information technology, financial and professional services, and homeland security and defense.

### **How are Banner Centers funded?**

Workforce Florida is financing the Aerospace Resource Center and the Employ Florida Banner Center for Career Academies with federal funds. The Aerospace Resource Center was awarded a \$1.2 million grant. The Employ Florida Banner Center for Manufacturing Excellence, Employ Florida Banner Center for Biotechnology, Employ Florida Banner Center for Financial Services, Employ Florida Banner Center for Construction, Employ Florida Banner Center for Energy, Employ Florida Banner Center for Health Sciences, Employ Florida Banner Center for Homeland Security and Defense and the Employ Florida Banner Center for Logistics and Distribution are funded for through an appropriation from the Florida Legislature. Each program was awarded a \$500,000 grant.

For more information on Employ Florida Banner Centers, go to [www.EmployFlorida.com](http://www.EmployFlorida.com) or call toll free (866) FLA-2345.

*Workforce Florida is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. All voice telephone numbers on this document may be reached by persons using TTY/TDD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711.*