

Florida's Workforce System: Designing the Future and Delivering Better Solutions for Talent and Business



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Florida Workforce System Mission

Florida will develop the state's business climate by designing and implementing strategies that help Floridians enter, remain and advance in the workforce, becoming more highly skilled and successful, benefiting Florida business and the entire state.

Background:

Florida was one of the first states in the nation to implement national and state welfare reforms in 1996. Florida's focus on positioning its public workforce development system to take on a major role in transitioning families from public assistance to self sufficiency also was the beginning of what would later become a major overhaul of the system in 2000. With passage of the Workforce Innovation Act of 2000, the entire system was revamped to create a private sector-led workforce system with a mission and priorities aligned with state economic development plans and a charge to continue the work of maximizing training resources and services to help every Floridian find employment and advance in the workforce. This act established the current composition of the state's main workforce partners: **Workforce Florida** (the policy board), the **Agency for Workforce Innovation** (state agency responsible for administrative and fiscal affairs), **24 Regional Workforce Boards** (primarily responsible for service delivery) and **nearly 100 one-stop centers** (bricks-and-mortar gateway to services and resources for most businesses and job seekers). And though they are different, Workforce Florida, its main economic counterpart Enterprise Florida, Visit Florida and Space Florida all share a critical commonality—public-private partnership. Each represents an alliance of government, business, community, education and economic development to address issues vital to Florida's economic future.

A year ago, Workforce Florida Chairman Katherine E. Wilson and the Workforce Florida Board of Directors began a dialogue supported by the Florida Workforce Development Association to recognize the successes of Florida's system to date and begin to plot its future course considering what, if any, changes may be needed to weather the workforce challenges ahead. In January, Governor Charlie Crist began his executive leadership of the state with an inauguration pledge to ensure "Florida is open for business, that our citizens do not just have jobs, but good jobs." To date, Florida is seven months into the transition led by Governor Crist and during the 2007 regular session legislation was introduced to make changes to the seven-year-old Workforce Innovation Act. All of these events have culminated with plans for a series of statewide, public forums to hear first-hand from stakeholders (workforce, education, economic development, community, etc.) about whether and what changes should be made to the Workforce Innovation Act (Chapter 445) to ensure Florida's workforce system maintains its record of innovation and responsiveness to the needs of businesses and workers to keep our economy strong.

This discussion is framed by four critical questions:

1. *Where did we come from?*
2. *What have we done?*
3. *Where are we going?*
4. *How do we get there?*

The six main objectives of these forums are to:

- **Provide a brief historical perspective on the structure of Florida's private sector-led workforce system and its strategic priorities.**
- **Look at the workforce system successes and how they relate to workforce strategic goals and the state economic development plan.**
- **Evaluate areas for improvement in Florida's workforce system.**
- **Define the next level that Florida's workforce system wants to excel to and how to connect this to the Governor's priorities for economic development and sound fiscal stewardship.**
- **Identify and begin to address the challenges (funding, skilled labor shortages, etc.) that exist now and are on the horizon affecting Florida's ability to take our workforce system to the next level?**
- **Determine the next steps to propel Florida's workforce system forward.**