

**Workforce Florida, Inc.**  
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**New Center Focuses on Improving Skills of Florida's Financial Services Workforce**

**Miami Dade College launches the Employ Florida Banner Center for Financial Services**

MIAMI — Backed by a \$500,000 grant from Workforce Florida, Inc., Miami Dade College has launched the Employ Florida Banner Center for Financial Services aimed at expanding training opportunities for people employed or seeking a career in banking, finance and insurance.

The Employ Florida Banner Center for Financial Services at Miami Dade College is the fourth in a series of new Employ Florida Banner Centers launched this year. The Workforce Florida, Inc.-financed initiatives are being established throughout Florida to ensure workers have the skills to meet current and future needs of industries vital to the state's economy.

“Employ Florida Banner Centers demonstrate our state's commitment to strengthen and expand Florida's economy through strategic investments,” said Gov. Jeb Bush. “An important factor in sustaining Florida's strong economic outlook is preparing our workforce for the high-skill, high-wage job opportunities available now and on the horizon in industries such as financial services.”

In addition to financial services, Employ Florida Banner Centers have been created to focus on workforce development in biotechnology, manufacturing, and aviation and aerospace.

The Employ Florida Banner Center for Financial Services at Miami Dade College will develop timely, new curricula, with industry input, for training entry-level and experienced workers in financial services. Short-term, in-demand training will be based on industry-recognized standards and credentials and will encompass key skills for

people employed or seeking employment in depository and non-depository banking, securities and insurance. The center will serve as a statewide resource for the industry as well as for other educational institutions wishing to incorporate financial services training into their programs. Training will be offered through Miami Dade College and made available to other educational institutions and financial services companies. Among the program's many partners are the Center for Financial Training in South Florida and Financial Florida, a statewide nonprofit organization created to promote, attract and grow the financial services sector and whose members include major financial services companies.

"The Employ Florida Banner Center for Financial Services at Miami Dade College represents a major step toward removing lack of a qualified workforce as a barrier to expansion of Florida's financial services sector," said Katherine Wilson, Chairman of Workforce Florida, Inc. "It will not only advance the competitiveness of financial services companies already located in our state, but also help attract new business."

Financial services corporate leaders joined workforce and Miami Dade College officials at the college today to outline plans for the new program, which will be housed within the School of Business.

"Miami Dade College is proud to be the home base for this important new program," said Dr. Eduardo J. Padrón, President of Miami Dade College. "With the college's outstanding record for delivering financial education, the support of South Florida's robust national and international financial sector and industry backing from the state's other financial services hubs in Tampa Bay, Jacksonville and Orlando, we're ready to undertake our new role in building a stronger banking, finance and insurance workforce."

In 2004, Florida's financial services industry employed more than 330,000 people with an average annual wage of \$56,120, according to Enterprise Florida, Inc. The sector's statewide economic impact is highlighted in a 2004 study. According to the "Florida Financial Services 2004 Cluster Research" report, in 2003 Florida's financial services cluster contributed about "1,228,000 jobs, over \$158 billion of output, and wage and salary disbursements for workers totaling over \$42.5 billion." The study also notes "for every financial services job in Florida, an additional 1.69 jobs are created indirectly," and that the sector annually generates more than \$6.8 billion in state tax revenue and more than \$3.8 billion in city and county tax revenue.

"The challenge to sustain and grow this high-value sector in Florida is a global one," said Ghassan Hakim, a Financial Florida Board member and Chair of Financial Florida's Education Council and Senior Vice President for Franklin Templeton Investments. "We must make sure that the financial services sector remains a strong contributor to Florida's economy and the Employ Florida Banner Center for Financial Services at Miami Dade College is a major boost to this effort."

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The Employ Florida Banner Center for Financial Services at Miami Dade College is part of a \$5.2 million strategic initiative of the state workforce system. The three other Banner Centers are: the Aerospace Resource Center, created by Florida Community College at Jacksonville and Brevard Community College; the Employ Florida Banner Center for Manufacturing Excellence at Hillsborough Community College; and the Employ Florida Banner Center for Biotechnology at the University of Florida. Additional centers are being planned for industries including construction, energy, health care, homeland security and defense, information technology and logistics and distribution. These centers are part of the Employ Florida network of state and local workforce partners and services.

For more information on Employ Florida Banner Centers, please go to

[www.EmployFlorida.com](http://www.EmployFlorida.com).

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Workforce Florida, Inc., (WFI) is the state's chief workforce policy organization and principal architect in the efforts to meet the current and future workforce needs and challenges of Florida's businesses and citizens. WFI is a state partner, along with the Agency for Workforce Innovation, in the Employ Florida affiliate network of 24 business-led regional workforce boards and nearly 100 one-stop centers that provide employment solutions throughout Florida. Learn more about Florida's workforce resources and solutions at [www.EmployFlorida.com](http://www.EmployFlorida.com).

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