

## WORKFORCE FLORIDA STATE LEVEL ACTIVITIES

The Workforce Florida Board as charged by the Workforce Innovation Act of 2000 maintains three state-level policy councils for the purpose of addressing specific workforce populations and issues. The local Regional Workforce Boards are charged with maintaining corresponding committees for the same purpose. Through initiatives funded by the state councils and the corresponding local committees, innovative approaches to improving Florida's workforce and increasing the competitiveness of Florida businesses can be demonstrated.

Workforce Florida's Office of Business Outreach administers Workforce Florida's three state-level councils as well as the employer-specific training programs. This office also liaison's with the business and economic development communities in the state to foster economic growth.

The Workforce Florida Board may also create, as needed, special committees, work groups and task forces to address specific challenges and issues. Examples of special committees and task forces are: the Nursing Task Force; the One-Stop Committee; the Strategic Planning Workgroup; the Red and Green Performance Review Workgroup; and, the Targeted Occupations Task Force.

The next section provides highlights of state-level activities of Workforce Florida's various offices, councils, committees, task forces and workgroups.

### *Office of Business Outreach Activities, Programs and Initiatives*

The Workforce Florida Board of Directors annually allocates each of its three policy Councils state-level funds to implement training initiatives that build on policy objectives outlined in the strategic plan. These initiatives take the workforce system to the next level by changing behavior and emphasizing demand-driven services. During 2003-04, each Council received a \$4 million allocation to accomplish these strategic objectives. Additionally, Workforce Florida's employer-specific training program, Quick Response Training (annual allocation of \$5 million) and Incumbent Worker Training (annual allocation of \$2 million) are included in the High Skills/High Wages Council's activities. All together, a little over \$27 million was competitively awarded for targeted training throughout the state. These funds leveraged another \$169.7 million—netting over \$6 to every \$1 invested by Workforce Florida. A total of 36,709 persons received training for approximately \$738 per person.

Highlights of council activities, programs and initiatives follow.

### High Skills/High Wages Council

*The purpose of the High Skills/High Wages Council is to develop strategies which align Florida's education and training programs with high-paying, high-demand occupations that advance individuals' careers, build a more skilled workforce and enhance the state's efforts to attract and expand job-creating businesses.*

## Training Projects:

### ***Employed Worker Training Initiative***

Purpose: To provide funding to RWBs to provide skills upgrade training to persons employed by industries targeted by Enterprise Florida.

Funding Allocation: \$3,027,382 [\$2,400,000 PLUS an additional \$478,382 awarded by the WFI Executive Committee on 10-15-03 and \$149,000 in unused biotech curriculum funds [WIA 15%]

Awards/Outcomes: Awards made to 17 RWBs on 10-03-03 to provide skills upgrade training to 6,296 workers in targeted industries. [RWBs 3, 4, 5, 7, and 9 did not respond to original RFP.]

State's Average Investment per Trainee: \$464

Final Report: Funds were deobligated from RWBs 1, 2 and 24, resulting in a final total award amount of \$2,821,279 and a reduced overall training goal of 6,082 persons. Final results will be available after 8-30-04.

Lessons Learned/Identified Issues: Reporting difficulties in entering data have been experienced. AWI Contract management staff worked with individual RWBs to resolve.

### ***Teacher Training Initiative – Dislocated Workers***

Purpose: To provide assistance to dislocated workers, particularly those with bachelors' degrees to transition to teaching careers (emphasis in math/science).

Funding Allocation: \$250,000 [WIA 15%]

Awards/Outcomes: Awards made to three RWBs with critical need for teachers –RWBs 12, 21 and 23—on 4-22-03. Total number of teachers to be trained - 100.

State's Average Investment per Trainee: \$2,500 per trainee

Final Report: 17 teachers trained.

Lessons Learned/Identified Issues: Two RWBs – R 12 and R23 voluntarily deobligated funds due to inability to identify eligible dislocated workers with math or science degrees who were interested in transitioning to teaching. Project ended 12-31-03. It appears that this type of initiative is better designed with local coordination emphasizing partnerships between a RWB and its school district.

### ***Quick Response Training Program***

Purpose: Provide grant funds for employer-specific training for businesses creating new high skill/high wage jobs in targeted industries. Wage requirements are relaxed for projects in rural/urban distressed areas, brownfields and enterprise zones.

Funding Allocation: \$5,000,000 annually [NOTE: State General Revenue Funds]

State's Average Investment per Trainee: \$883

Final Report: Since July 1, 2003, 10,890 workers are receiving customized training for new jobs created by five new and 33 expanding Florida companies.

Lessons Learned/Identified Issues: Several counties in Florida, particularly rural counties, have never had a company benefit from QRT training assistance. Consistent with the Governor's desire that Florida's rural regions receive special assistance to participate in the state's economic diversification efforts, staff has developed a rural outreach plan that will be accomplished with advice from the Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development's rural expert, Mary Helen Blakeslee. The plan was discussed at the 2-20-04

Council meeting. A presentation on the program was made to the Florida Rural Economic Development Initiative on April 13th in Lake City. Council staff will participate in upcoming rural workshops being organized by Enterprise Florida and OTTED.

***Incumbent Worker Training Program***

Purpose: Provide grant funds to assist Florida companies with skill upgrade training for their existing workforce to help them remain competitive. Funding priority is given to businesses that are small, or located in rural, enterprise zone, brownfield or inner-city areas, and those businesses in a targeted industry.

Funding Allocation: \$2,000,000 annually [WIA 15%]

State's Average Investment per Trainee: \$183

Final Report: Since July 1st, grants to 82 individual companies and one consortium project have been awarded for the training of 14,735 incumbent workers.

Lessons Learned/Identified Issues: IWT funds are rapidly expended due to this program's popularity and great need by Florida business. For this reason, the Council and WFI Board approved an additional \$1,000,000 in funding be allocated to this program.

Non-Training Projects:

***Biotechnology Curriculum Development***

Purpose: To provide funding for research and development; development/validation /assessment of biotech training curricula; and the formulation of a training delivery system that meets the needs of Florida's biotech industry for existing and future workers.

Funding Allocation: \$1,200,000 [WIA 15%]

Awards/Outcomes: Funds awarded to Florida Consortium for Biotechnology Workforce Development with Florida Community College at Jacksonville as fiscal agent. Project concludes on 6-30-05 and will be noted in future progress reports.

State's Average Investment per Trainee: not applicable

Progress to Date: Project underway. All three industry focus groups have been completed—held in Gainesville, Tampa and West Palm Beach. Curriculum and specific training delivery system are in development stage. Project is in design and production mode.

Identified Issues: None

Proposed Solutions: Not applicable

***Labor Market Information Services Initiative***

Purpose: Provided funding to RWBs to expand and customize products and services offered by AWI/LMI. The value of services per RWB was capped at \$15,000. This initiative enabled employers, job seekers, and economic development organizations to have relevant information to make good business and career decisions. Services included: employer/industry analysis, top occupations by industry, vacancy surveys, skills and jobs by education levels for targeted jobs, and other customized services.

Funding Allocation: \$190,000 [WIA 15%]

Awards/Outcomes: Funds awarded to all 18 RWBs that applied.

State's Average Investment per Trainee: not applicable

Final Report: All projects concluded.

Lessons Learned/Identified Issues: Project provided valuable services to participating regions.

## Better Jobs/Better Wages Council

*The purpose of the Better Jobs/Better Wages Council is to assist families transitioning from welfare to work, former welfare recipients working in low-wage jobs with limited mobility, and the larger population of underemployed adults move toward self-sufficiency by employing prevention, diversion, pre-employment and post-employment strategies that focus on engaging employers and facilitating non-traditional training/education programs.*

### Training Projects:

#### ***Career Advancement & Retention Challenge III***

Purpose: Innovative employed worker training programs that target career advancement and retention for current and former TANF recipients and TANF eligible families at risk of welfare dependency.

Funding Allocation: \$3,980,000 [TANF]

Awards/Outcomes: Awards to 12 RWBs totaling \$3,950,570. 1,554 were projected to be enrolled and 1,671 were actually enrolled; the deliverables included 75% or 1,166 of projected enrollments would complete training and to date 1,120 or 72% actually completed – based on previous years it is anticipated that as data is entered through August 31 (the actual deadline for data entry) the RWBs will meet or exceed the 75% target; of those targeted to complete, deliverables included that 65% or 758 would obtain upgraded positions, receive an increase in earnings, or continue education. These longitudinal measures will be tracked through December 2004 and reported to the Council. Also participant and employer satisfaction are tracked and will be reported.

State's Average Investment per Trainee: \$2,364

Final Report: Awards were made to RWBs on 9-23-03.

Lessons Learned/Identified Issues: AWI Contract Management should continue to work with RWBs on data entry issues so that all performance tracking issues are resolved. WFI will track the CARC III recipients through the FETPIP UI database to validate earnings gain and job retention and report back to the Council. Please refer to August 12th Better Jobs/Better Wages Council meeting materials for additional information.

#### ***Step-Up Training Challenge III***

Purpose: To assist targeted populations to obtain or enhance work skills leading to career placement, advancement and retention.

Funding Allocation: Original allocation was \$5,611,193 [Welfare-to-Work]. After de-obligations/re-obligations, the final allocation was \$4,570,218.

Awards/Outcomes: Awards to 10 RWBs for 11 projects. Final number of persons enrolled in training was 1,706. Performance tracking will include placement, retention and earnings gain outcomes.

State's Average Investment per Trainee: \$2,679

Final Report: Funds rescinded from RWBs 14 and 15 totaled \$577,500. RWB 16 (Pasco, Hernando) voluntarily deobligated \$590,000 of its \$630,000 award. Training goal reduced to 2,317 from 2,665 as a result. Note: Project ended 12-31-03. (Data is obtained from UC records which is two quarters behind. To date the placement goal has been exceeded – 135% of goal achieved. Progress on the retention and earnings gain goals on target and are projected to be achieved.)

Lessons Learned/Identified Issues: The Federal funds were rescinded January 2004. All projects were closed prior to this date.

### First Jobs/First Wages Council

*The purpose of the First Jobs/First Wages Council is to promote successful entry of youth into the workforce through education and job experience, including school-to-work initiatives that enlist business and community support to ensure that students have the educational and occupational skills required to succeed in the workforce. This council also addresses adults entering the workforce for the first time and youth programs related to welfare reform.*

### Training Projects:

#### ***Education: Pathways to Independence***

Purpose: To assist RWBs or organizations partnering with RWBs for activities that support drop-out prevention/retrieval programs requiring training in reading, math, workforce attitudes as well as four additional intervention strategies.

Funding Allocation: Total awards: \$1,982,500 [\$1,482,500 (WIA 15%) and \$500,000 (TANF)].

Awards/Outcomes: Awards originally made to seven RWBs to provide assistance to 792 youth. This was revised downward: Total awards \$1,493,878 and 591 youth assisted (see below).

State's Average Investment per Trainee: \$2,528

Final Report: Awards were made to RWBs on 10-08-03. Three of the seven RWBs deobligated funds totaling \$688,829. RWB 8 (Jacksonville) requested to deobligate \$227,747 of their original \$334,907 award on January 28th due to a change in service providers. RWB 23 (Miami-Dade) requested via letter dated February 4th to deobligate the entire \$425,000 awarded due to implementation problems with Miami-Dade County Public Schools who was to have functioned as the program contractor. The schools would not permit students who had failed the FCAT to participate in shared enrollment activities at the technical center. High schools would not release students who had been recruited to participate in this initiative to take their vocational and FCAT preparation work at the technical center. RWB 23 is working toward a resolution, but such resolution could not be implemented within the time frame of this grant. When RWBs were polled in March to determine if they would have unspent TANF funds, RWB 20 (Treasure Coast) voluntarily deobligated \$36,082.

Lessons Learned/Identified Issues: This grant depended heavily on coordination with educational institutions and the various Department of Juvenile Justice facilities for access to youth as well as other recruitment strategies to recruit out-of-school youth. Several of the providers encountered some difficulties influencing the total number they were able to serve and in one case resulted in voluntary deobligation of the entire grant. There were some unanticipated problems with the project deliverables which were based on outcomes, not just the number served. The deliverables were for various activities which could be entered using some of the same codes in OSMIS, so it was difficult to display and then discern on the performance report the exact activity, for comparative purposes, the youth had participated in, i.e., paid work experience or work readiness. Additionally, some of the data was

questionable because participant records (case notes) or reports from schools governed by privacy laws were the source of documentation for some of the deliverables. It was determined that more specific reporting instructions should be issued to the regions so the information can be obtained from OSMIS that is comparable between regions. Also, it is incumbent on the regions to enter the data timely so that the performance reports accurately reflect performance and expenditures.

### ***Skills Training for Youth/First Time Job Entrants***

Purpose: To assist RWBs or organizations partnering with RWBs for training targeted to high growth/high impact jobs that pay a living wage. Business Services and Health Services jobs were targeted, but jobs in alternative industries were also considered.

Funding Allocation: \$1,982,500 [WIA 15%]

Awards/Outcomes: Awards were made to six RWBs and one chamber of commerce that provided training to 1,032 youth/first time job entrants—exceeding the original training goal of 970. Total awards: \$1,947,702.

State's Average Investment per Trainee: \$1,887

Final Report: Awards were made to RWBs on 9-19-03.

Lessons Learned/Identified Issues: Same as for Pathways above relating to project deliverables based on outcomes, not just the number of youth served, the need for specific reporting instructions, and the need for RWBs to enter data timely.

## Cross Council Projects

### ***Worker Readiness Certification***

The three state councils reserved a total of \$350,000 in 2003-04 to support a cross council initiative on worker readiness. This initiative addresses several of the concerns described by employers and will provide job seekers and incumbent workers with certification of job-ready skills that will facilitate career advancement and job retention. At its May 2003 meeting, the WFI Board approved joining a national work readiness initiative initially organized by the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). This multi-year project is well underway.

In mid-April 2004, as described in the MOU with NIFL, the management and administrative entity duties of the credential effort transitioned from NIFL to the Policy Oversight Committee (POC), comprised of the state and national partners. One of the first management tasks of the POC was to identify a new umbrella administrative entity. Discussions are now underway with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—one of the national partners—to have this organization serve as the umbrella administrative entity. SRI will continue to manage the development of the credentialing process. Dr. Sondra Stein will continue to serve as project manager responsible and accountable to the POC.

### ***Other State-level Activities and Initiatives***

#### **One-Stop Committee**

*The One-Stop Task Force of the Workforce Florida Board was originally established to develop a state-wide workforce brand for the one-stop system and design an initial marketing campaign. Additional areas of focus were added to include one-stop minimum standards,*

*credentialing, best practices awards and, electronic access to one-stop services. In PY03-04 the Task Force was continued as a regular committee of the Workforce Florida Board with regional workforce board and local partner staff included in its membership.*

### ***One-Stop Marketing***

The **Employ Florida** affiliate brand continues to be developed as a tool for customers to find workforce resources and services throughout Florida. The website, [www.employflorida.net](http://www.employflorida.net), provides a consolidated point of access for locating local and state level contact information as well as continually updated and expanded links to other relevant information.

All 24 regional workforce boards as well as the two state partners, Workforce Florida and the Agency for Workforce Innovation, have representation on the state Employ Florida Marketing Consortium which began meeting quarterly in 2004 for the following purposes:

- Review and evaluate previous and on-going Employ Florida outreach/marketing
- Discuss current local and state marketing activities
- Share and discuss solutions for system-wide and multi-regional outreach
- Identify future opportunities
- Continue to develop and adjust the Employ Florida affiliate brand strategy

The Employ Florida brand managers and/or consortium members provide regular updates to the Workforce Florida One-Stop Committee as well as at the Workforce Florida Partners Meetings.