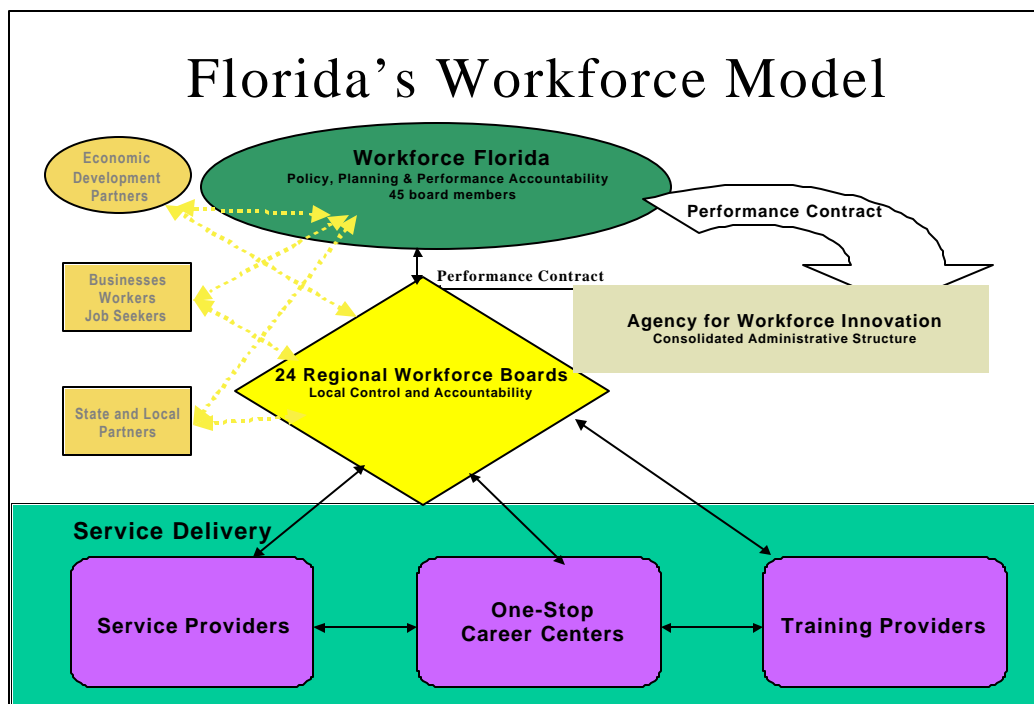


WORKFORCE FLORIDA OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

The Creation Of Workforce Florida

Workforce Florida, Inc. was created by Governor Jeb Bush and the Florida Legislature in the passage of the Workforce Innovation Act of 2000, Chapter 445, Florida Statutes. A 45-member board is appointed by the Governor to oversee and monitor the administration of the state's workforce policy, programs and services carried out by the 24 business-led regional workforce boards and the Agency for Workforce Innovation. Direct services are provided at 150+ One-Stop Career Centers with locations in every county in the state. This innovative approach to workforce development in Florida is illustrated in the model below.



The Workforce Innovation Act of 2000 charged Workforce Florida, Inc. to meet the workforce needs and challenges of Florida businesses. Linking workforce and economic development strategies through business-driven initiatives and programs ensures that Florida's workforce is well trained with skills that will meet current and future business needs. Also key to the state's economic success is an environment where Floridians have the opportunity to upgrade their education and skills to obtain jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

The Workforce system was designed to create partnerships between economic development, workforce development and businesses. In addition, the system is operated through performance-based contracts that increase accountability of all entities to meet strategic and legislative mandated goals.

Another key component of the new system is allowing the regional workforce boards to have local control. While each regional board has performance measures and contracts to provide accountability, the choice of initiatives and programs it implements are under the local board's control. This allows for programs to reflect the economic development, business and workforce needs of each particular region of the state.

Serving the Customer

Florida's One-Stop Career Center system was established to bring workforce and welfare transition programs together under one physical or "virtual" roof to simplify and improve access for employers seeking qualified workers or training programs for their existing employees and job seekers. Today, there are over 150 One-Stop Career Centers across Florida managed at the local level by regional workforce boards. Some are full-service centers providing direct access to a comprehensive array of programs at a single location, while others are satellite facilities capable of providing referrals or electronic access. The goal is to move beyond co-location of programs to full integration to provide seamless service to customers.

Serving the Business Customer

Recent federal and state workforce legislation emphasized the importance of serving the business customer and has made the system more accountable by tying performance funding to customer satisfaction. Florida's One-Stop Career Center system is a key resource for businesses seeking assistance with training existing employees or finding qualified entry-level workers. Several regions have established dedicated employer One-Stop Career Centers in business districts to help local employers recruit, train and retain workers.

In addition to services provided at the local level, Workforce Florida also administers two employer-specific training programs at the state level—the Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) and the Quick Response Training (QRT) Programs. The Incumbent Worker Training Program provides grant funding for existing businesses to upgrade the skills of existing employees. The Quick Response Training Program provides grant funding for customized training for new or expanding businesses to effectively retain and attract businesses that create new high-quality jobs.

Serving Job Seekers

One-Stop Career Centers are the "front door" for Floridians seeking job placement, workforce education and training, unemployment compensation, temporary cash assistance, and workforce support services such as childcare. The federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 mandates participation by nearly a dozen agencies that determine eligibility for and provide:

- Adult job placement and training
- Unemployment insurance
- Vocational Rehabilitation services
- Transitional services to assist job seekers move from welfare to work
- Veterans Employment & Training.

Florida's Virtual One-Stop Career Center

In addition to its brick and mortar service centers, Florida will soon launch **SunshineJobs.Biz**, an Internet-based job match application that supports all of Florida's workforce delivery activities and services. **SunshineJobs.Biz** will have the nation's largest pool of Florida jobs and job applicants. Job seekers from around the nation will be able to post resumes on the site, giving them ready exposure to businesses in Florida who are in need of qualified and work-ready employees.

Employers will be able to post job orders at no cost and specify the exact qualities they are looking for in their workforce. Screening tools will allow employers to select candidates for interviews from applicants who meet their specific criteria, saving the employer both time and expense. **SunshineJobs.Biz** will also be the richest and most extensive source of Florida labor market intelligence featuring complete research on Florida's labor force, economic and demographic data.

Organizational Strategies

The Workforce Innovation Act of 2000 also mandated the creation of three councils at the state level and replicated at the local level with three committees. The council members are appointed from the Workforce Florida Board, ensuring that business is at the table, and are charged with developing targeted strategies to lead the effort of identifying, creating and maintaining a workforce that meets the needs of businesses. These councils are:

- **First Jobs/First Wages Council** is charged with preparing students and first-time workers, including teen parents on welfare, for jobs.
- **Better Jobs/Better Wages Council** is responsible for assisting families transitioning from welfare; former welfare recipients working in low-wage jobs with limited mobility; and the larger population of underemployed adult workers – to retain employment, upgrade skills and ultimately achieve career advancement.
- **High Skills/High Wages Council** directs initiatives that align education and training programs with high-paying, high-demand jobs to advance careers, build a more skilled workforce, and enhance the state's efforts to attract and expand job-creating businesses.

Historical Perspective

Understanding where we are today requires perspective on where we have been. What follows is a brief history of Florida's workforce system and events leading up to the integrated system now in place.

Before July 1996

Regional Private Industry Councils (PICs) existed in Florida and elsewhere across the country. The federal Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) established the councils to oversee spending of federal job training funds. There was minimal state law governing job training and other welfare programs.

July 1996

The state Workforce Florida Act replaced Private Industry Councils with Regional Workforce Development Boards and realigned regions to match community college districts. The Legislature also passed the Work & Gain Economic Self-Sufficiency (WAGES) Act to implement welfare reform. While two separate boards existed at the state level, the law allowed regional workforce boards to also function as WAGES coalitions overseeing welfare reform at the local level. Meanwhile, the state Department of Labor began running WAGES activities and placing people in jobs. The Department continued providing upfront job registration and placement for the next year.

July 1998

The Legislature took all WAGES responsibilities from the Department of Labor and gave them to local boards, which were already contracting for case management and support services for welfare recipients in their areas. WAGES contracting and fiscal management was transferred to the Department of Management Services.

August 1998

The federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) was signed into law replacing the Job Training Partnership Act and consolidated about 14 different funding streams under the One-Stop System, which was to be governed by local workforce boards. Florida was one of six states that signed on as an early implementing state, beginning July 1999.

October 1999

Senate President Toni Jennings announced the creation of a Senate Select Committee on Workforce Innovation to consolidate workforce and welfare reform programs into a single point of accountability. Chaired by Senator Jim King of Jacksonville, the Committee held meetings throughout the state and issued a final report in early 2000 that became the foundation for the proposed legislation. Governor Jeb Bush signed the landmark Workforce Innovation Act into law, which took effect July 1, 2000.

July 2000

The Florida Workforce Innovation Act became law. At the state level, Workforce Florida was created as a separate not-for-profit corporation replacing the state Workforce Development Board that functioned as a board of Enterprise Florida, Inc. and the WAGES board. Regional boards also were consolidated. Additionally, the law transferred most of the functions of the Department of Labor to a smaller Agency for Workforce Innovation. The Agency for Workforce Innovation now contracts with 24 regional workforce boards. These boards have local control to provide workforce and welfare transition services and programs through over 150 One-Stop Career Centers.

WORKFORCE FLORIDA COUNCILS

Each of the three Councils established by the Workforce Innovation Act of 2000 target a specific workforce population. Through initiatives funded by statewide and local councils, the goal is to improve Florida's workforce and thus positively impact existing and new Florida businesses.

High Skills/High Wages

Seeks to develop a more skilled workforce by aligning education and training programs with higher-paying, high-demand jobs that advance careers and build a more skilled workforce and partner with economic development to enhance the state's efforts to attract, grow and expand job-creating businesses. The High Skills/High Wage Council also oversees the two state-level employer-specific training programs, Incumbent Worker Training and Quick Response Training Programs.

Better Jobs/Better Wages

Assist families transitioning from welfare to work and former welfare recipients working in low-wage jobs with limited mobility, and the larger population of under-employed adults.

First Jobs/First Wages

Promotes successful entry 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. Also addresses adults entering the workforce for the first time and youth programs related to welfare reform.

HIGH SKILLS/HIGH WAGES COUNCIL

Purpose: *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.*

The High Skills/High Wages (HS/HW) Council continues its emphasis on promoting skills upgrade training for existing employees in order to “build a more skilled workforce and enhance the state’s efforts to attract and expand job-creating businesses.” The lessons learned from the first year’s training challenge provided many useful tools to help refine and update funding priorities, strategies and FY 01/02 initiatives.

“Having local advanced training classes available to our businesses is critical to corporate expansions and is an incentive to new companies looking to locate here.”

James J. DeGennaro, Director of Business Development, Office of Economic Development - Polk County

2001-2002 Highlights

Targeted Industry Training Challenge

The Council voted to allocate \$3.96 million to provide short-term, skills upgrade training to incumbent workers in Florida’s targeted industries. These industries have been identified by Enterprise Florida, Inc., the state’s economic development entity, and the Governor’s Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development as having the greatest potential for growth and overall economic impact to the state. A competitive RFP was issued with the overall goal of training a minimum of 1,500 employees statewide. The RFP also stressed the development of partnerships and the strengthening of relationships between local economic development organizations, regional workforce boards, training providers and targeted industry businesses. Eleven regional workforce boards received grants to train over 4,000 existing workers. The results of this challenge generated a total of 4,202 incumbent workers receiving training and 3,998 receiving industry-recognized certifications. Through private sector leveraging of funds, the actual average state investment per trainee was \$927.

“Numerous employees have been promoted within the company as a direct result of the skills they have acquired through the participation in this training project, and we expect more promotions as jobs are filled and new jobs are created. We are confident that if our employees continue to receive training to develop their skills that in turn they will become more employable and therefore benefit not only Swisher, but the manufacturing community as large.”

Mindy M. Odom, Swisher International, Inc., Jacksonville

Florida Plastics Consortium

Modeled after the successful Incumbent Worker Training Program partnership between Workforce Florida and the Society of Plastics Industry, this project provided \$247,500 toward the training and certification of 330 existing workers in the plastics industry. Extrusion and

injection molding training is being delivered via satellite downlink at various locations across the state. Due to the events of 9/11, this project was extended from June 30, 2002 until December 31, 2002. To date, 100 people have been trained and certified.

Workforce Certification Project

A competitive RFP was issued with a goal of developing, validating and implementing an employer-driven program of industry certifications and standards. The RFP also stressed the need to identify soft skills as well as technical skills for four occupations: electronic technician, customer service representative, machinist and software developer. A total of \$100,000 was allocated for the project and awarded to two regional workforce boards. The project was successfully completed except for one deliverable (the identification and training of skill standards for software developer). This resulted in 90 people being served and \$87,500 being expended. The certification program is available for replication within the state.

“Our associates are held accountable for the training they receive. For each class they attend, the outcomes should meet or exceed the goals set by a developmental plan. This means reliable, effective and on-demand training is required, and that is what the Marion Regional Manufacturers Institute provided.”

Kevin Harrison
Dayco Products, LLC,
Marion County

High Tech Corridor Labor Market Intelligence Survey

The HS/HW Council contributed funds to this cross-council project to develop a business-survey/web-based interactive system for employers in the Central Florida area in concert with 10 regional workforce boards. It emphasized the need to design a user-friendly tool which would provide the employer with real time labor market information to address immediate workforce goals and strategies. A survey instrument was developed and thousands of businesses were involved via the survey process. The final report included an executive summary, an electronic database file and an action plan to better serve employers through the One-Stop system.

Workforce Economic Development Summit

To facilitate increased involvement between workforce and economic development systems, the HS/HW Council hosted the second annual workforce/economic development summit.

“We must help communities use the public workforce as an economic development tool.”

Raymond Gilley, Chair
Workforce Florida

The summit immediately followed the Florida Economic Development Council Annual Conference in October 2001 in Cape Canaveral and showcased best practices between regional workforce boards and economic development organizations. Over 100 attendees participated and received information on how to use the workforce system as an economic development tool to support regional and state economic growth.

Policy Initiatives

Implementation of Employed Worker Training (EWT)

The need for skills-upgrade training continues to be a common theme expressed in suggestions received from regional HS/HW committees and business surveys. The demand

for training assistance from the statewide Incumbent Worker Training program was evidenced by requests totaling in excess of \$7.43 million for the limited \$2 million allocation. For these reasons, the HS/HW Council recommended and the WFI Board approved that each Regional Workforce Board modify its five-year plan to specify methods for upgrading the skills of existing workers in its region. This plan modification would address how additional funds will be leveraged, partnerships developed to accomplish this objective, and lead contacts identified.

The Workforce Florida Board of Directors also adopted a proposal to include a measure on the Red and Green Performance Report for “employed workers”. This was specifically done to correct the failure of the reporting system to include those trained under this option. Baseline numbers were provided to the local regions for the new measure in the preliminary year-end report presented at the August 2002 board meeting. Employed Worker Training (EWT) performances will be measured and included on the Red and Green Performance Report for the current program year.

“The knowledge gained through the training program will be beneficial in increasing the overall skill levels of our information technology staff. These new skills will impact the productivity and support of our company’s IT operations and infrastructure.”

Ricardo A. Davis, Danka,
Pinellas County

Employed Worker Training Policy Guidance Paper

The Council and the Agency for Workforce Innovation staff developed a paper and FAQ’s to provide guidelines to the regional workforce boards for the provision of WIA-funded training services to employed workers. This paper included a matrix that outlined key distinctions between training services provided to incumbent workers via the state-level Incumbent Worker Training Program and training services provided to employed workers using local funds.

Challenges/Barriers

Leveraging limited state level incumbent worker training funds by implementing employed worker training initiatives at the regional level has been a tremendous challenge. The Employed Worker Training (EWT) guidance paper as well as the addition of the EWT performance measure has laid the foundation for making progress in this area.

“The training that was provided will aid our employees in the effective performance of their duties by enhancing their understanding of the core database architecture and logic. This understanding will allow them to more effectively manage and maintain business critical applications, as well as communicate more effectively with vendors and support personnel.”

R. Andrew Sroka
Fischer International Systems Corporation
Collier County

Improved communication and linkages between the state council and local board committees are also needed to maximize and enhance the state’s mission of attracting and expanding job-creating businesses.

Future Goals/Strategies

The Council has identified the following goals and strategies for the 2002-2003 program year:

- Developing and implementing a plan to provide technical assistance, training and guidance to regional HS/HW committees to identify common issues and solutions and showcase best practices.
- Reviewing and updating the strategic plan and priorities for evaluating funding requests.
- Identifying a non-state funded alternative training modality for critical industry training.
- Focusing training initiatives on a targeted industry in collaboration with a statewide consortium.
- Promotion of current, user-friendly labor market information.

QUICK RESPONSE TRAINING AND INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING PROGRAMS

The High Skills/High Wages Council also oversees the two state level employer-specific training programs, Quick Response Training and the Incumbent Worker Training Programs, administered directly by Workforce Florida. The next two sections provide an overview of the 2001/2002 program year for both of these programs.

“This is a good example of the public and private sectors working together to improve the economy. Programs of this nature demonstrate a positive impact for industrial development and workforce expansion.”

State Representative Allen Bense, Bay County

QUICK RESPONSE TRAINING

Florida’s communities must compete aggressively to attract new businesses and support expansion of existing enterprise. Investments in economic development create higher paying jobs, and in turn, build desirable living environments. Initiated in July 1993, within the Florida Department of Commerce, Division of Economic Development, the Quick Response Training (QRT) Program was the state’s first attempt to link workforce development with economic development. It enabled Florida to compete with other states that typically have customized training budgets three to four times greater than Florida’s resources for this critical location and retention incentive.

“QRT...allowed us the freedom to explore various types of training programs and specialized instruction. The QRT program has been instrumental in assisting us in developing the employee knowledge, skills and abilities needed to work in our high-technology workplace.”

Joyce Holman,
Mitsubishi Power Systems
Orange County

The QRT program partners with Enterprise Florida, economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, community colleges, technical schools and universities as well as regional workforce boards to support local economic development and workforce development strategies. Grant funds are provided for customized, entry-level skills training not available at the local level. Companies receiving the grant funds gained skilled employees for their operations, reported increased profitability

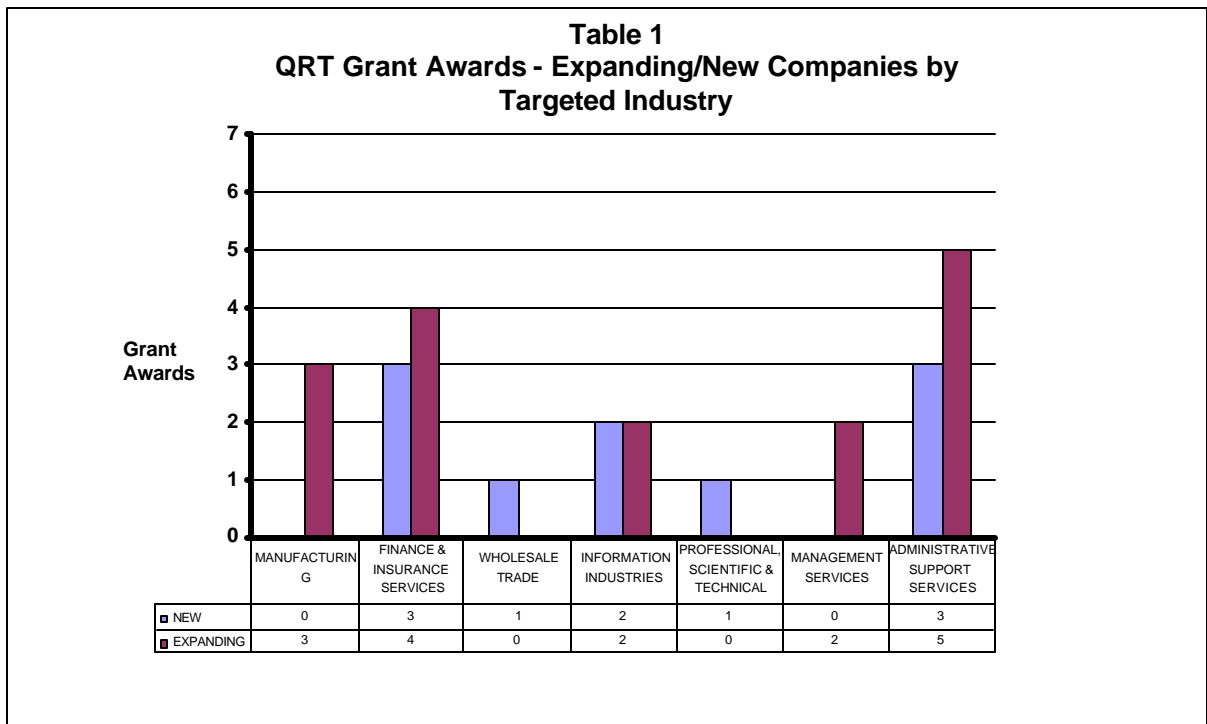
from enhanced employee productivity and faster implementation of startup and expansion. In addition, Florida residents hired for these new high skill/high wage jobs earned a salary while learning new skills that increased their employability now and in the future.

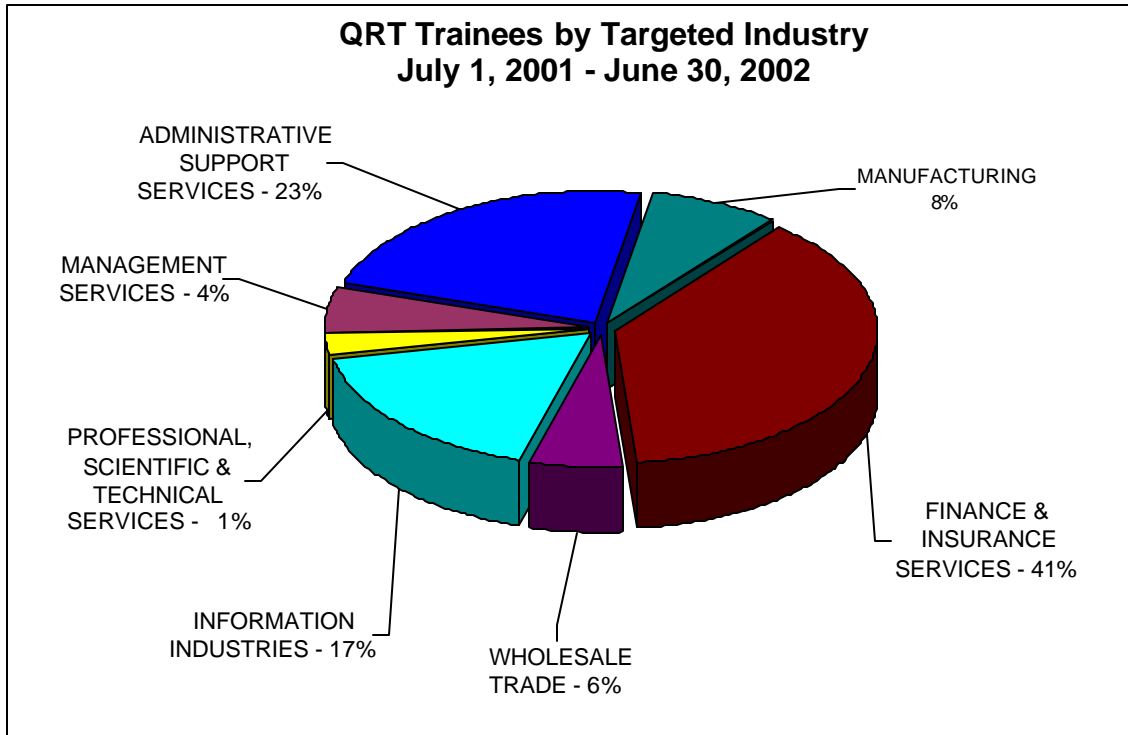
Today, QRT continues to be a vital component of Florida’s economic development efforts, providing customized training for new and expanding targeted businesses across the state. In less than ten years this employer-specific, customized training program has played a key role in the location or expansion decisions of over 270 competitive economic development projects. These projects have directly created over 65,000 new jobs in Florida.

“Quick Response Training allowed our firm to be more competitive in our bid to receive contract manufacturing projects. The flexibility of the QRT program allowed us to provide the specialized training required on site, with the actual equipment that the new employees would be operating.”
Bob Brown, Toms Foods
Taylor County
(Enterprise Zone project in a rural county)

2001-2002 Highlights

Grant funds were awarded to 26 quality economic development projects totaling \$6,263,130 to provide training for 7,646 new employees. Table 1 presents 2001/2002 QRT grant awards by targeted industry and new or expanding companies. Sixteen of the grants will benefit the expansion of existing Florida businesses, and ten will reimburse training costs and reduce up-front expenses for businesses new to the state.





The greatest number of trainees (41%) was in the Finance & Insurance Services sector (see chart above). This industry sector is composed of nondepository credit institutions and related activities, insurance carriers, security/commodity brokers, funds, trusts and other financial vehicles.

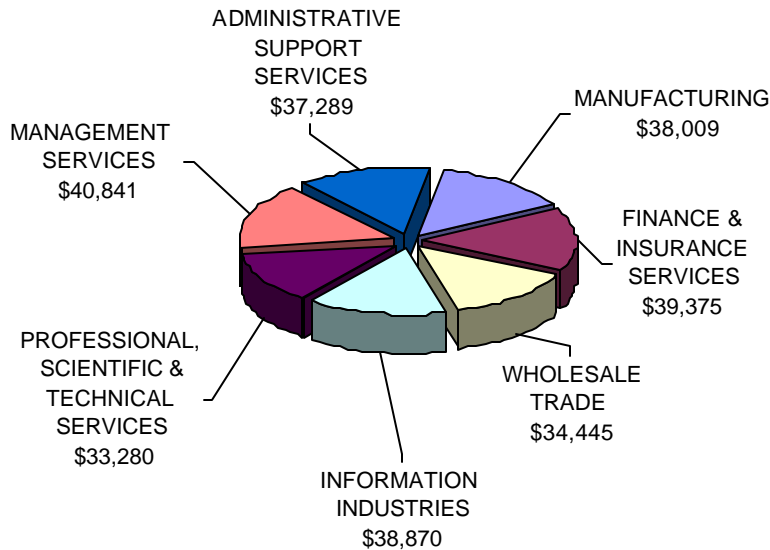
All QRT training grants require companies to create high skill/high wage jobs and hire and train new employees before any training costs are reimbursed. Training costs eligible for reimbursement include instructor's and/or trainer's salaries, manuals/textbooks and curriculum development. Through the companies' in-kind-matches to the training programs, Workforce Florida augmented the state's investment of \$6 million with an additional \$50.8 million in private sector contributions. This resulted in Florida workers receiving a total of \$8.11 in training benefits for every \$1.00 the state invested with program costs being contained to an average of \$819 per person.

"This program allowed us to expand our training programs for our current workers and resulted in increased skills in several important areas. We appreciate Workforce Florida Inc.'s commitment to our state's economic competitiveness through a well-trained workforce."

Marion Sarrica, Paravant Computer Systems, Inc.,
Brevard County

The average annual wage for the new jobs created with QRT assistance ranged from \$33,280 for the Professional, Scientific & Technical Services industry category to \$40,841 for the Management Services industry category substantiating that these new jobs present high wage opportunities for Floridians (see chart below).

Average Annual Wage of QRT Participants by Targeted Industry Category July 1, 2001 - June 30, 2002



Challenges

Throughout Florida, the economic downturn and the events of 9/11 caused many businesses who were preparing to expand to change their hiring timelines. However, through programs like Quick Response Training, Workforce Florida was able to respond quickly and with flexibility to rebuild, restore and strengthen the economy by revising training programs to be more adaptable to the needs of the company. The twenty-four month grant term also ensured companies the opportunity to continue their expansion plans as the economy recovered.

“On behalf of TRX, Inc. thank you for allowing us to become part of a well-run program. We appreciate the opportunity to take advantage of the economic benefits, which helped TRX, Inc. become one of the largest and recognized employers in the Milton, Florida area.”

Vicky Egan, Director of Training, TRX, Inc.

INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING

The Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Program provides expense reimbursement grant funding for training the incumbent workforce of existing businesses. It was created in an effort to be proactive in maintaining worker skills and assisting Florida companies to remain competitive through upgrade skills training for existing workforce. This advanced skills training not only benefits the employee, but the employer and the state. If an employee faces a lay-off situation, these skills will assist them with reemployment. As an economic development tool, it produces highly skilled and knowledgeable workers which positions Florida to attract new businesses to the state or to provide expansion opportunities for existing employers. The program is

administered by Workforce Florida and is funded from the state's 15% discretionary funds provided by Florida's allocation of Federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) dollars. Since inception of the program in 1999, the IWT Program has provided training funds for over 20,780 existing employees for more than 330 businesses.

To be eligible to receive an IWT grant award, businesses must have been in Florida for a minimum of one year, have at least one employee, and certify that the business is current on all state tax obligations. The business may use public, private, or its own in-house training provider based on the nature of the training. Funding priority is given to:

- Businesses with 25 or fewer employees
- Businesses located in rural, enterprise zone, brownfield and inner-city areas
- Businesses in a qualified targeted industry.

All training grants awarded to companies are performance-based, expense reimbursement contracts, with companies only being reimbursed for approved and documented training expenses associated with a specific number of incumbent workers completing training during the contract period.

2001-02 Highlights

In the second full year of program implementation, following a pilot in FY99/00, the Legislature allocated \$2,000,000 to the state IWT Program for FY01/02. In addition, the Workforce Florida Board obligated an additional \$800,000 to the program in late January 2001. The demand for incumbent worker training assistance was evidenced by requests totaling \$7,475,855 from 143 companies.

Grant awards totaling \$2,504,255 were made to 100 companies in 23 counties. By June 30, 2002, 82 companies had trained 6,062 incumbent workers. An additional seven companies had received grant awards in late January 2001 (when the Workforce Florida Board obligated additional funds) with contracts ending December 31, 2001. Five companies requested and were granted contract extensions to December 31, 2001 due to extenuating circumstances. Factoring in the

PRESTIGIOUS NAWB AWARD

Workforce Florida was recognized by the National Association of Workforce Boards with the Theodore E. Small Distinguished Honor Award in March 2002 for the Florida Incumbent Worker Plastics Training Project--a partnership between Workforce Florida and The Society of the Plastics Industry, Inc

This innovative project brought together a state workforce development board, a national trade association, a state broadcasting network and a manufacturing extension research and training program. Thirty-three plastics manufacturing companies and nine educational institutions located across 12 Florida counties participated in the live, interactive training via satellite resulting in certification for 230 workers.

The plastics project was the first industry-wide consortium project attempted by Workforce Florida. The recognition highlighted the creative use of federal funding to provide industry-specific training.

“The training project was a huge success and the training goals and objectives were met. Managers and supervisors were given Performance Management Training and we implemented Pay-for-Performance for all of our employees. Morale among our employees increased.”

*Christina Stokes, Human Resources Director
Atkins Temptec – Gainesville*

employees trained from these 12 companies with contracts extending beyond June 30, 2001, the total number of incumbent workers actually trained with FY01/02 IWT funds was 7,735 exceeding the projected 6,435.

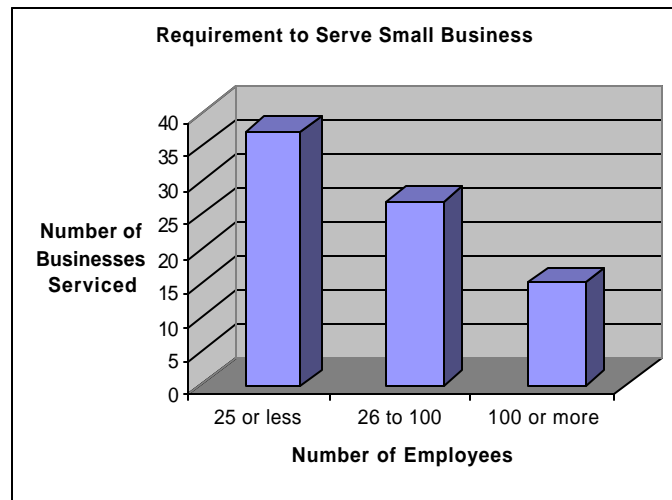
The types of skills training funded by the IWT grants were very diverse. Examples include:

industry-specific technical skills, lean manufacturing, quality assurance and compliance (including ISO 9001 and other industry-specific skills), computer application skills (both general and industry or company-specific), customer service and supervisory/leadership skills.

Funding Priorities Performance

Florida Statute directs the IWT program to give funding priority to projects in several areas that strategically assist with strengthening Florida’s economy. These include:

Businesses with 25 or fewer employees. Forty-seven businesses with 25 or fewer employees applied for IWT grant awards. Seventy-nine percent of these (37 businesses) were awarded training grants representing 37% of all IWT Program training grants awarded in FY01/02.



The IWT Program also measures performance by the number of grants provided to companies with 100 or fewer employees. Eighty-one applications were received from businesses with 100 or fewer employees. Seventy-nine percent of the small businesses in this category (64 businesses) were awarded state IWT Program training grants. This represents 64% of all IWT Program training grants awarded in FY01/02. The twelve applications transferred to FY01/02 status were not included in these analyses.

The actual average state investment per trainee was \$389 for the FY01/02 IWT funds. The employers’ average contribution to these training projects totaled \$2,459 per trainee.

Businesses located in rural and inner city areas. One hundred percent of the businesses located in rural, distressed inner city areas, and/or enterprise zones that submitted IWT grant

applications (31 businesses), received grant awards. This represents 31% of the total number of training grants awarded in FY01/02.

Businesses in a qualified targeted industry. Ninety-eight of the businesses receiving IWT grant awards represented 19 of the 26 industry categories listed on the Qualified Target Industry list identified by the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development (OTTED) in consultation with Enterprise Florida, Inc. This represents 98% of all the grants awarded.

BETTER JOBS/BETTER WAGES COUNCIL

Purpose: *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 retention and career advancement strategies.*

The passage of the Workforce Innovation Act by the Florida Legislature in July 2000 merged both the mission and responsibilities of the WAGES State Board with the State Workforce Development Board of Enterprise Florida, Inc. to create Workforce Florida, Inc. The predecessor welfare reform program (WAGES) was renamed the Welfare Transition Program. The Better Jobs/Better Wages Council defines goals and objectives for Welfare Transition Program clients, Welfare-to-Work Program clients, and underemployed adult workers. To accomplish its goals and objectives, the Better Jobs/Better Wages Council partners with the 24 regional workforce boards and other organizations that have an interest in improving Florida's workforce to better meet the needs of the state's economy. The Welfare Transition clients and the underemployed adult workers are funded with a federal grant, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) from Health and Human Services (HHS). The Welfare-to-Work Program clients, which include hard-to-employ welfare recipients and eligible non-custodial parents, are funded through a federal grant from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). Please refer to Appendices for short-term and longitudinal outcome measures specific to the Welfare Transition and Welfare-to-Work Programs.

2001-2002 Highlights

Employer and Community Awareness Grant

In April 2001, the Council awarded seven regional workforce boards a total of \$2,900,000 in funds to implement an employer and community awareness campaign. Objectives of the grant solicitation were to move welfare recipients to gainful employment, provide a vehicle for employers to address the needs of entry level workers, educate employers on best practices for successful employment and retention programs, and identify ways to expand the use of One-Stops by employers. Participating regions report the number of employers using the One-Stop services increased by as much as 40% and the number of job seekers being placed in employment increased by 25%.

Career Advancement and Retention Challenge I

Identifying that career advancement and retention are critical elements in Florida's Welfare Transition strategy; the Council released an RFP solicitation that targeted innovative training and retention strategies. This initiative fostered the development of key relationships between regional boards and employers and focused on training in industries and occupations that continue to be viable in the current economy. As a result of this grant, the regions have defined and designed new outreach processes to identify those former welfare recipients who need additional training and support services to continue their move toward self-sufficiency. Approximately \$2,400,000 dollars were spent on 1,200 clients to either better prepare unemployed welfare clients for employment or upgrade the skills of employed former welfare clients.

Ounce of Prevention

This three year \$4.5 million dollar demonstration project initiative has focused on providing a year-round comprehensive teen pregnancy prevention program model. The scope of work was to identify an effective teen pregnancy prevention program model that could be replicated across the state. Based on interim reports, all performance goals have been met. In addition, the final evaluation (to be released December of 2002) will further identify best practices and lessons learned to focus and strengthen teen pregnancy prevention efforts throughout Florida.

Commission on Responsible Fatherhood (CORF)

This three year \$3 million dollar demonstration project is designed to implement job placement and parental education services for non-custodial parents through consultation with the Commission on Responsible Fatherhood. Interim reports indicate all performance goals have been met or exceeded. At its conclusion in December of 2002, an extensive evaluation of the overall program will be provided to the Board allowing for an informed consideration of future services to non-custodial parents of welfare families.

Passport to Economic Progress Pilot Demonstration

This demonstration project (Hillsborough and Manatee Counties) is designed to increase family income levels and provide services to assist families in achieving and maintaining economic self-sufficiency through the provision of extended transitional services and wage supplementation up to 100% of federal poverty guidelines. A significant outcome of this demonstration project is that regional workforce boards must focus on improving post-employment outreach procedures. A final report is due in January 2003.

Welfare Collaborative Capacity Building Study

The project included a study of welfare client characteristics (new, returning, and continuing) and the link with services provided and outcomes. The final paper describes each regional workforce board's capacity to connect assessment, services, and monitoring with the achievement of desired outcomes. Final report develops and identifies logic models, promising practices and other tools for building or improving the capacity of the regional workforce boards (and service providers) to screen and assess clients, design services, and achieve outcomes. A specific outcome of this project deals with addressing learning disabilities. It was identified that few regions are adequately screening and referring WTP clients for learning disabilities, yet clients with specific learning disabilities will most likely return to the caseload or remain on the caseload until their needs are addressed.

Labor Market Intelligence Pilot

This cross-Council project developed a pilot for business survey/web-based interactive system for employers in the Central Florida area in concert with 10 Regional Workforce Boards. Funded with \$350,000 in WIA funds shared among the WFI Board (\$250,000) and the three policy Councils (\$100,000, or \$33,300 – Council's one-third share) through a competitive, contractual process. Regions have reported that this project produced a user-friendly labor market information system. This pilot emphasizes the need to design tools,

which provide employers with real time labor market information to address their immediate workforce needs.

Policy Initiatives

As directed by statute, during the first two years, the Better Jobs/Better Wages Council recommended to the full WFI Board approval of four guidance papers/policy documents.

Relocation Assistance

This program is provided to families who reside in areas, where due to certain barriers (limited employment opportunities, formidable transportation barriers or being a victim of domestic violence), the family has been unable to move to self-sufficiency. Relocation will enable them to move to an area that will provide the opportunities needed.

Cash Assistance Severance Benefit

This program provides \$1,000 cash incentive to individuals who are currently working and receiving temporary cash assistance. It is provided as an incentive to encourage individuals to exit and remain off of cash assistance while saving their months of cash assistance for a time when they really need it.

Hardship Exemption to Time Limitations

This program provides for a hardship exemption from the 48-month time limit for up to 20% of the average monthly caseload.

Individual Development Account (IDA)

This asset development policy allows TANF recipients to save and accumulate money for one of three specified purposes without detrimentally affecting TANF eligibility. The program is designed to allow a TANF recipient to save some of his/her earned income and accumulate a few thousand dollars for investment in higher education/job training, home ownership and micro enterprise. To encourage and reward the "new saver," matching funds are provided so the TANF recipient can reach the savings goal more quickly.

Challenges/Barriers

Meeting the Needs of the Employer Community

Florida businesses cite their biggest problem with the public employment system is the referral of non-qualified applicants. Florida must focus on the importance of increasing the skills of Welfare Transition clients before job placement to address educational deficiencies that might significantly limit their work or earnings capacity. Only about 40 percent of cash assistance recipients in Florida have a high school diploma/GED equivalency. This must be addressed if clients are to ever achieve the ultimate goal of self-sufficiency.

Achieving Self-Sufficiency

Underemployed incumbent workers (who have never received public assistance) with limited skills need access to career advancement and job retention programs that will assist them in moving to self-sufficiency. Although the welfare caseload has been dramatically reduced, quantitative and qualitative studies indicate that approximately 40% of the clients who have left for employment are earning \$7.00 to \$9.99 per hour. This would annualize to \$14,560 –

\$20,779. For a family of three, the Federal Poverty income guideline is \$14,630. Florida defines needy as a family whose income is less than 200% of poverty.

We have succeeded in putting our clients into the workplace; we have not fully addressed the issue of poverty and moving toward self-sufficiency.

Welfare Reform was implemented in 1996 during unprecedented economic expansion and there were more jobs than there were job seekers. As demonstrated during 2001, an economic downturn impacts our ability to place job seekers and requires us to focus on employer outreach to find the placement opportunities and to address the employer concerns as described above. Also we must focus on skills upgrade training to ensure our clients retain their jobs and achieve career advancement and earnings gain.

Clients transitioning from welfare are extremely vulnerable to the challenges of managing work, family, childcare and transportation. To encourage these clients to also include skills upgrade training/education is both extremely critical and difficult. Florida must continue to address the post-employment needs of those Welfare Transition clients who have found employment and other incumbent workers with limited skills and earnings who have never been on welfare. It is critical that these working needy poor obtain the skills and training necessary to achieve career advancement and increased earnings.

Local Challenges

Pre-employment welfare transition efforts must continue to focus on getting people to work while ensuring that the client is “work-ready”. Regional processes for providing post-employment skills upgrade training must be improved.

Future Goals/Strategies

It is now apparent that Welfare Reform today has a different “face” than it did in 1996 and the workforce system must develop new service delivery models to address the changing customer profiles. We still serve clients new to welfare, yet a larger percentage of our caseload have multiple barriers that must be addressed. A larger percentage of our clients are transitional clients who have recently become employed but may benefit in the future from employed worker training to upgrade skills, obtain job advancement and increased earnings. There is a need to serve the working needy poor earning less than 200% of poverty who have never received welfare but may also benefit from employed worker training to upgrade skills, obtain job advancement/ increased earnings and ultimately achieve self-sufficiency.

Council Funded Grants

- **Career Advancement and Retention Challenge II Grant Solicitation (TANF Grant)** - The current year project focuses only on post-employment/employed worker training. A \$4.8 million dollar Grant Solicitation was issued on July 5, 2002 to the regional boards. The grant sought innovative, employed worker training programs for current and former welfare recipients and working needy poor families at risk of welfare dependency.

- **Step-Up Challenge III (Welfare-to-Work Grant)** - The current Step-Up grant (\$5.8 million) focuses on projects that assist the targeted hard-to-serve population obtain or enhance work skills leading to placement, advancement and retention.

Projects in Progress

- **Worker Readiness Certification** - Better Job/Better Wages council reserved \$100,000 to support a cross-Council initiative - Worker Readiness Certification. This initiative addresses several of the concerns described by the employers and will provide job seekers and incumbent workers with certification of job-ready skills that will facilitate career advancement and job retention.
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Reauthorization Workshop** – The federal block grant that funds Welfare Transition efforts is due for reauthorization. Better Jobs/Better Wages Council will work with the Agency for Workforce Innovation and Department of Children and Families to hold a TANF Reauthorization Workshop to address the changes that will result from the new legislation; to discuss the lessons learned; and to integrate that information into the strategies for ensuring that Florida successfully implements the new TANF legislation.

Policies/Guidance/Direction

- Council will review final reports from state funded projects to determine next steps that could include the need for policy/guidance/direction.
- Council will assess the effectiveness of the diversion services provided by the Regional Workforce Boards. These services focus on diverting families at risk of welfare dependence by redirecting them to other employment or support services. In 2000-2001, 2,401 families made this choice. In the 2001-2002 program year, 3,419 families opted for this type of help rather than welfare dependency, an increase of 42 percent.
- Council will assess the effectiveness of Transitional Services as a strategy in facilitating career advancement and job retention. Welfare Transition clients who find employment are eligible for transition services that include childcare, transportation and education for up to two years if funding is available. The number of individual participants who received transitional services in 2001-2002 program year was 23,598. This number is only approximately 4,000 less than the number of Welfare Transition clients who are receiving cash assistance (the caseload number). The critical factor in providing transitional services is availability of funds.
- Council will review TANF Reauthorization and determine recommendations for appropriate statutory language, policy recommendations and guidance documents.

Strategic Plan Update

The Council will continually review/revise/update the strategic plan including an assessment of existing methods of communication/coordination/cooperation with all partners.

FIRST JOBS/FIRST WAGES COUNCIL

Purpose: *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.*

The First Jobs/First Wages (FJ/FW) Council continues to link first-time workers to available training and education programs through its strategic initiatives and projects. First-time workers may include students, displaced homemakers, older Americans, veterans, persons with disability and/or welfare recipients as well as youth who are no longer enrolled in schools. The components of the Council's strategy include efforts that enlist business, education and community support for students to achieve long-term career goals, ensuring that young people and adults entering the workplace for the first time have the academic and occupational skills required to succeed in the workplace.

2001-2002 Highlights

Career Paths for Youth

This project provided business-driven guidance, job shadowing or internship services to youth to encourage them to choose a career in a business or industry identified as critical to Florida's economic growth. Services were provided through partnerships between local workforce boards and business/industry associations or economic development organizations. Organizations that partnered with their local workforce boards included the Florida Homebuilders Association, Bay County Economic Development Council, the Internet Coast Economic Development Council, the Kennedy Space Center, and the Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce. Nearly \$2.5 million was dedicated to *Career Paths for Youth* resulting in 1,768 youth served, exceeding the original goal by 93. Cost per trainee was \$1,414.

First Jobs Course Change

Almost \$4 million was directed to the *First Jobs Course Change* training initiative across twenty of Florida's twenty-four workforce regions. Innovative programs involving mentoring, job-coaching and counseling engaged 22,569 youth through the local One-Stop Career Centers.

The *Youthful Offender Re-Entry Project* provided skills assessment, soft skills and vocational training, mentoring and OJT services to juvenile offenders released from the Department of Juvenile Justice. Four local workforce boards used a total of \$232,640 to provide services to 88 youth successfully placing 36 in jobs.

Cross Council Projects

The *Labor Market Intelligence/Job Matching Pilot* was funded by all three Councils for the purpose of constructing a state-of-the-art, non-duplicative labor market intelligence system

designed to give Florida business access to current, accurate labor market information in an easy to access format. Competitively awarded to the Florida High Tech Corridor Council for development of the system, each Council equally funded this \$100,000 project.

The First Jobs/First Wages Council partnered with the Better Jobs/Better Wages Council to fund several *Employer/Community Awareness Projects*. Seven local workforce regions with established Workforce 2020 awards or similar contracts with local chambers were able to work with these partners to expand their outreach efforts to include younger workers, students, displaced homemakers without children, the disabled and older workers. The projects worked with multiple employers in the seven regions resulting in increased job orders from businesses, increased business awareness, and the establishment of web sites for enhanced employer focus.

Advancing Youth Policy

The First Jobs Institute was competitively awarded to the University of West Florida to research and market best practices for assisting youth in obtaining their first job. The primary emphasis is youth with barriers to employment. The Institute sponsored business seminars, and developed successful strategies for marketing first time workers.

The First Jobs/First Wages Council partnered with the Florida Chamber of Commerce Foundation to host Florida's first *Florida Youth Summit* in Orlando, November 15-16, 2001. The event brought together educators, school leaders, youth committee chairs, regional workforce board executive directors, youth agency representatives, policy makers and businesses to focus on the needs of Florida's youth. Topics included improving Florida's intellectual infrastructure to increase graduation rates, boosting the prospects for first time job seekers, entry level workers and to provide businesses with a better prepared workforce

Youth Outreach

Florida Trend's NEXT Magazine

Florida's high school students are the workforce of the future. High school students are not only faced with academic preparation for graduation, most are also beginning to shape their direction for future employment and careers. Career awareness, skills assessment, mentoring programs, internships, as well as, GED classes, teen pregnancy prevention and other services to ensure successful entry into the workforce are available through Florida's workforce system.

To promote these services to the teen audience, Workforce Florida continued its participation in Florida Trend's highly successful *NEXT* magazine. *Florida Trend's NEXT* magazine is written by and for high school students. Workforce Florida obtained a four page full color layout in the 2001/2002 issue promoting all of the services available to youth through the One-Stop Career Centers. In addition to providing a copy of the magazine to all Florida youth, grades 9-12, *Florida Trend's NEXT Magazine* also provides a Teacher's Guide with suggestions on how to incorporate the magazine into lesson plans and classroom activities. The magazine also has a companion website at



www.FloridaNext.com with additional expanded information, links, activities, surveys and more.

Challenges/Barriers Encountered and Creative Resolutions

The events of September 11, 2001 resulted in a delay of all Workforce Florida Council projects and activities that relied on the award of grant funds until it was determined that *Operation Paycheck*, the workforce system's primary response to this unprecedented event, was fully operational. At that time grant awards were made, however, the delayed startup in several cases resulted in some of the training projects (e.g. the Youthful Offender Re-Entry Project) not being able to utilize all of their funds before the contracted end date. The Workforce Florida Board gave flexibility to the FJ/FW Council to redirect these unutilized funds which resulted in the creation of the *Youth Quick Fund*.

The *Youth Quick Fund* was authorized to fund projects that did not exceed 90 days in length and ended by June 30, 2002. To expedite the release of these funds, a quick census of the 24 regional workforce boards was taken to determine which regions could immediately put these funds to use on First Jobs/First Wages Council priorities. Nine regions were funded resulting in an additional 3,362+ youth served for approximately \$422 each.

A variety of activities benefiting youth were funded including: skills training; summer enrichment programs for at-risk youth; summer reading camps; facilitation and enhancement of a rural transportation program for youth; summer work experiences/internships; software/hardware improvements to track youth data; youth job fairs; scholarships for at-risk youth; drop-out prevention classes; career transcript system for high school youth; healthcare education recruitment and retention; a mobile "youth opportunity resource center" to provide services to youth in outlying areas and minority communities who cannot access One-Stop centers; enhancements to Teen Pregnancy Prevention and Youth volunteer partnership outreach efforts; Career Exploration & Leadership Camps; and upgrades to the www.careersnow.org website where youth can obtain a work readiness certificate and complete interactive curricula.

Council Funding Request Policy and Procedures

Another unforeseen challenge for all of the Workforce Florida councils was handling the numerous requests for funds. All council funds are awarded competitively; however, unsolicited funding requests have great potential for educating the Council about emerging trends or needs and thus should not be discouraged. Council staff developed and the Board approved a process for dealing with unsolicited funding requests in a standard and consistent process. All funding requests must be consistent with the priorities of a Council to be considered. The procedures for evaluating all requests for funding and the application form are maintained on the Workforce Florida website.

Younger Youth Skill Attainment Measures

Federal law requires that goals be set for youth, ages 14-18, in three areas: basic skills, work readiness and occupational skills. Last year there was a great deal of concern at the state level that these goals were interpreted in different ways across the state and resulting in lack of consistency in reporting these youth services and outcomes. A working group assembled

over the past year to clarify these youth skill attainment goals and to ensure services to youth result in meaningful outcomes.

Goals and Strategies for the Future

Future areas of focus for the First Jobs/First Wages Council include: improving services to out-of-school youth; development of policy regarding alternative youth eligibility documentation; strengthening partnerships with other organizations that serve youth such as education organizations, community and faith-based organizations, and state agencies; and expanding youth outreach through additional year-round activities associated with the 2002/2003 Edition of Florida Trend's NEXT Magazine.

Better Serving Out-of-School Youth

The changing demographics of our country is increasing the demand in health care services, social and financial services, real estate, travel and leisure activities, etc. To meet these needs in the changing economy it is critical that all youth be engaged in basic workplace experiences and basic skills preparation. Recruiting out-of-school youth who have dropped out of school or failed to gain the skills needed in the workplace is a priority to meet the increasing demands for an educated and skilled workforce.

Policy on Alternative Youth Eligibility Documentation

The First Jobs/First Wages Council and the Workforce Development Board heard testimony from the regional workforce boards that the difficulty associated with documenting youth eligibility was encumbering their efforts to serve out-of-school youth. The Board recommended that Florida act on the guidance from the United States Department of Labor that gives states the authority to establish their own policies, interpretations, guidelines and definitions relating to verifying and documenting eligibility, as long as they are consistent with WIA. A workgroup that included representatives from the regional workforce boards convened to discuss the sampling method used by Job Corp that allows self attestation by some applicants because it had been approved by the Office of Inspector General. The policy and implementation training is currently being finalized and will be in use by mid-year.

Strengthening Partnerships with those that Serve Youth

Building partnerships is central to the role of Workforce Florida. The foundation of the approach is due in large part to the Workforce Investment Act and Florida's Workforce Innovation Act that marries welfare reform, workforce development, and economic development strategies to develop Florida's workforce and economic well being. It is only natural for this agency to initiate a process for linking key partners and resources in the business of youth job preparation and participation. During a time of diminishing resources we can't afford to be unnecessarily duplicating services. We must clearly define or redefine our roles to contribute the most value-added services. We plan to explore the need and means to nurture, promote, and expand these partnerships by convening a forum to initiate and sustain a dialogue with state agencies and organizations involved in youth job preparation and participation.

Youth Outreach

Workforce Florida will continue its participation in Florida Trend's highly successful *NEXT* magazine in 2003 expanding it to include teen involvement in a competition to develop a cartoon based approach to informing the teen audience what Florida's workforce system has to offer them.



- **“Awesome”**
- Makes me feel important
- Exactly what teens need
- Fun, easy to read
- Hits the core
- Speaks to teens in our language
- Compelling
- Every student and grown-up should read this magazine
- I never knew how much I didn't know about college
- A life saver
- Helped pull my life together
- **“Got me Motivated”**
- Speaks the truth for teens
- Wow
- Grade A
- First time I have read every line in a magazine
- Encouraging
- NEXT is better than TEEN People
- Don't change it
- It's tight and the stories are on fire, you dig
- Hot
- **“I like the way you talk to us”**
- Makes me think
- I can use this as a map between now and until I graduate
- Helped me on the SAT/ACT
- I'm already getting new ideas
- I like the sample test questions
- Rating 1-10, I would give it an 11
- Great help for clueless teens
- **“Info on everything I'm freaking out about”**

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