



# PARTNERS' REPORT

May 2001

## Funding Takes Center Stage at Board Meeting

### *Allocation of TANF funds discussed*

For the regional boards, the allocation of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds is critical to their regional program budgets. At the March board meeting, recommendations on establishing a formula for distributing the fiscal year 2001 TANF funds to the 24 regional boards was discussed.

Currently, there is \$153 million in TANF funds available for distribution to the Regional Workforce Boards. A recommendation was made to distribute the base \$128 million to allow the regions to continue with existing programs. The remaining funds could be used as performance/incentive based monies to be distributed later to regions or for programs that demonstrate innovative thinking and sound and measurable results. *(continued on page 2)*

## Federal Government Reduces Florida WIA Dollars for Next Fiscal Year

The current distribution of federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds to the states resulted in funding reductions for 18 states. These reductions came despite the fact that the total national "pot" of WIA funds appropriated by Congress increased by 3.15 percent for the upcoming fiscal year. Florida will receive a total of \$117 million for WIA adult, youth and dislocated worker funds. This represents a 1.17 percent cut compared to the fiscal year 2000 allotment. Hawaii had the largest percent cut with 28.4 percent and Illinois received the largest increase at 14.5 percent. Other notable states include California with a 3.3 percent cut, New York with an 11.2 percent cut and Texas with a 1.12 percent increase.

The 2000 Census figures were not ready in enough detail to be used in the federal funding formulas for the 2001 fiscal year distribution. It is anticipated that the 2000 Census figures will not be used in calculating distribution for another two years. Florida and other growth states are expected to benefit significantly when the current Census data is used. *(continued on page 5)*

### *This Issue*

<b>March Board Meeting Recap</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>WIA Dollars Reduced</b>	1
<b>Fastest Growing Jobs</b>	3
<b>Customer Satisfaction Survey Results</b>	4
<b>Workforce Facts</b>	6
<b>Workforce Staff Make Regional Visits</b>	7
<b>Calendar</b>	8

### **Special Report Coming in May**

A special legislative issue of Partners' Report will be issued in May.

## Board Meeting Recap continued

(Continued from page 1)

Following the recommendations on funding, Board members discussed the issue and then members of the regional workforce boards were given the opportunity to comment.

After hearing from board members and regional workforce boards, Chairman Jennings garnered a sense of whether board members would support the recommended \$128 million base funding. A vote on the recommendation may be taken at the May 24 Board meeting.

### Board approves funding requests for all three councils

*High Skills/High Wages Council* presented two program-funding ideas that were approved by the Board contingent on funds being available.

The first is a Workforce Certification Project in the Palm Beach and Treasure Coast area. The project will identify occupational skill standards for three or four occupations and develop a certification-training program for these identified occupations. In addition, the project will develop a work readiness certification program that will address the soft skills needed for all employment.

The second project funded was the Florida Plastics Learning Consortium (FPLC), which will offer statewide training to incumbent plastics workers, especially those workers in small companies. Plastics companies generally retool on an average of every seven

years, which results in current workers needing new skill sets.

*Better Jobs/Better Wages Council* presented the Employer/Community Awareness campaign aimed at bridging the gap that exists between employers needing skilled workers and job seekers looking for jobs that offer a career path.

The Board approved \$5.4 million for the campaign with a cap of \$500,000 per approved project.

*First Jobs/First Wages Council* presented three proposals to foster partnerships with educational institutions, business/labor entities and the regional boards. All three proposals have an outcome measures of increasing jobs for the youth market. The Board approved an allocation of

\$3.5 million to create and implement these partnerships.

### Update on the Workforce integrated information management system

Board members heard an overview and status report on the workforce integrated management information system mandated by WIA 2000. "Transitions are always difficult," added Curtis Austin, President of Workforce Florida. "But we have to keep our eyes on the ultimate goal of workforce initiatives in Florida which is to provide employers, job seekers and other individuals efficient and quality services. With multiple systems that do not interface we are impeding the success of those we serve."

**"The discussion of the TANF funds is critical to each of our regions. While we recognize the importance of the funds, we have to balance those needs with the charge of the board which is ultimately to administer all funds in such a way that the workforce initiatives of the state will result in customer satisfaction and measurable outcomes."**

**Toni Jennings, Chairman  
Workforce Florida**

## Workforce Florida Staff Start Program Review

The Workforce Investment Act of 2000 requires that the Workforce Florida (WFI) staff will meet with each regional workforce board annually to review the board's performance and to certify that the board is in compliance with the new law.

### *One-Stop site visits*

To meet statutory requirements, joint teams of WFI and the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) staff have begun making site visits to each region. The purpose of the site visit is to gather information on performance over the past year, One-Stop implementation, and to discuss self-assessment and continuous improvement efforts with regional staff. This year's visits have included a special emphasis on employer services. The site visits have begun and each region should have a schedule of when the site visit will occur in their respective region.

### *Regional Workforce Board presentations*

The next phase of the regional visitation process will involve WFI staff making formal performance reports at each region's Board of Directors meetings beginning in mid-April and continuing through June. WFI President Curtis Austin and senior WFI staff, including Sheree Keeler, Larry Champion, Mike Switzer and JenniLee Robins, will make these presentations. The presentations will include comparative demographic/need data; comparative funding/resources; checklist of compliance with statutorily required changes; findings by the site visit teams; performance; and trend line and expenditure data. Each regional board should have the presentation date and the name of which staff member will be presenting in their region.

For more information, contact the Workforce Florida office at (850) 921-1119.

### **Workforce Florida President Discusses Florida Innovation in Nation's Capital**

On March 24, Workforce Florida (WFI) President Curtis Austin participated in the National Governors' Association (NGA) Human Services Policy Retreat. Austin, along with the NGA staff and the Utah Department of Workforce Services were part of a panel that discussed issues and options for improving integration and coordination between Welfare and Workforce Systems. Florida and Utah have led the nation in integrating their workforce and welfare reform systems, including governance, administration and service delivery systems. Though both have integrated these services, Utah has only one statewide service area while Florida operates through 24 regional workforce boards.

Austin's presentation focused on the myriad of programs and services offered through Florida's integrated system and the transition of workforce initiatives that have resulted in Florida becoming business driven and results oriented. Highlights of Florida's success in the presentation were the shifting of funds from administrative overhead into direct service delivery, the reduction of the average welfare stay from an average of 24 months to 8 months and an 84 percent decrease in families on welfare from 1996.

## Workforce Facts

### Families Receiving TANF Dollars Continues to Decline

The Department of Children & Families' Welfare Transition "Flashpoints" March 2001 report shows a continuing decline in the number of families receiving public or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds. In early March, there were 23,981 families statewide with an adult receiving TANF assistance. This is an 84 percent reduction compared to September 1996, the last month under the former welfare system. Duval and Hillsborough counties shared the greatest rate of decline. The greatest absolute number of cases reduced was in Dade County where the current caseload is 28,727 less than September 1996. Dade's current caseload of 8,340 represents 34.7 percent of the current statewide cases of TANF assistance.

### "How To" on Accessing Unobligated Wagner-Peyser Funds Coming Soon

The Agency for Workforce Innovation will be sending out instructions to all regions in the near future that will inform them on how to access unobligated Wagner-Peyser

(employment services) funds that have been made available for regional/local service delivery needs. The instructions will provide a table showing the funds available to each region and a description of options for accessing the funds.

### Applications for Workforce Development Awards Being Accepted

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the US Department of Labor (USDOL) have announced the 2001 Workforce Development Awards competition. The goals of the awards are to recognize programs that promote community college leadership and partnership in local workforce development systems, to publicize innovative and exemplary practices, and to enhance career-transition services for all students, including full use of the electronic services available through America's Tool Career Kit. The award application form is now available at [www.aacc.nche.edu/](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/). The deadline for applications is April 30, 2001. The four winning submissions will each receive a \$10,000 monetary award. The application packet is fairly simple with a narrative limited to 15 pages. A letter of support from the applicable Regional Workforce Board is required.

---

## In The News

### Gilley Gets Top Post

Ray Gilley, Chairman of the WFI High Skills/High Wages Council has been named the chief of the Economic Development Commission of Mid-Florida, Inc.

At EDC of Mid-Florida, Gilley will be managing a staff of 38 and responsible for marketing the region composed of Orange, Seminole, Lake and Osceola counties.

### Workforce Central Florida Receives Award

Workforce Central Florida (Region 12) received an award at the Computerworld Honors Program. Workforce Central Florida and two other programs were selected as laureates for the Computerworld Honors Collection, which recognizes a "who's who" of industry leaders from around the globe.

Workforce Central Florida, headed by Chairman Davis Wright and executive director Gary Earl, was honored for its One-Stop Career Center programs and web-based system.

---

## Workforce Estimating Conference

### History of WEC

The Workforce Estimating Conference (WEC) was created in s. 216, Florida Statutes, and replaces the Occupational Forecasting Committee. The conference members are required to meet at least twice a year and are responsible for developing official information on workforce development primarily as it relates to the personnel needs of current, new and emerging industries at the state and regional levels. Objectives include:

- ▶ Short and long-term forecasts of employment demands for jobs by occupation and industry.
- ▶ Entry and average wage forecasts among those occupations.
- ▶ Producing estimates of the supply of trained and qualified individuals for potential employment opportunities in these occupations, with special focus on high skills/high wages occupations.
- ▶ Reviewing state, local and regional data for trends and conditions, which may warrant inclusion of a particular occupation on the statewide occupational forecasting list.
- ▶ Making recommendations semiannually to Workforce Florida (WFI) on additions or deletions to the lists of locally targeted occupations.

### Update from February meeting

The Workforce Estimating Conference (WEC) met on February 22, 2001, in Tallahassee to discuss and decide on criterion for developing the targeted occupations list for fiscal year 2002-2003. Consensus was derived on both entry level and average wage thresholds for both the full Individual Training Account (ITA) list of occupations as well as the High Skills/High Wages subset, as follows:

#### **Full ITA List:**

Average Wage: \$9.00 /hour  
Entry-Wage Floor: \$7.00 /hour

#### **High Skills/High Wages Subset**

Average Wage: \$13.86 /hour  
Entry-Wage Floor: \$10.05 /hour

The WEC recommended that Workforce Florida provide recommendations and guidance to the Conference on the identification and use of 'critical' and 'horizon' jobs. Once determined, occupations meeting such criteria could be merged with the statewide occupations list developed by the Conference to further develop and refine the regional targeted occupations list. During the March Board meeting, Chairman Jennings authorized the establishment of a Board committee, headed by Linda Cooke, Workforce Florida Board member, to prepare suggested recommendations and parameters for consideration by the full Board at a future meeting.

## Issues Raised Regarding Customer Satisfaction Surveys

**A**t the Workforce Partners' meeting on March 22, concern was expressed over some of the numbers reported in the Customer Satisfaction Surveys. While the numbers reported are adequate and valid at the state-level, the sample size is of concern in some of the regions.

### Sample size is a concern

One of the major problems with sample size is under federal guidelines the survey must be completed within 60 days. This means that any participant information or employers' information that is entered into the management information system at 30 days or later cannot be included in the survey.

To help regions monitor the sample size, Brandt Information Systems maintains a secured web site and each region has been given access. This web site will be an invaluable tool for regions as they can monitor sample size and survey process at anytime.

### Why have customer surveys?

Both Federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) law and state law mandate that customer satisfaction surveys be conducted to determine the satisfaction of employers and job seekers/participants who have received workforce services. To meet the law requirement, Workforce Florida (WFI) contracts with Brandt Information Systems to conduct the surveys.

### Who developed the questions?

To ensure that federal WIA and state requirements were being met and that survey would be of value to the workforce efforts, a workgroup was formed. The workgroup had members representing several regional boards, staff of the Office of Labor Market Statistics, and WFI staff. This group worked diligently to design the survey that is used.

Additional background information and a summary of customer satisfaction survey results may be found on WFI's website at [www.workforceflorida.com](http://www.workforceflorida.com).



## Workforce Florida and Department of Corrections Partner to Help Offenders Succeed

While individuals who are released from prison can typically find some type of employment, a major obstacle to them is similar to those individuals who receive public assistance dollars; not just finding a job, but finding a career and an opportunity to make a better life. A newly formed partnership between Workforce Florida and the Department of Corrections hopes to assist ex-offenders in developing a career path.

The goal of the agreement is to increase the self-sufficiency of low-income ex-offenders through training and career advancement. This goal will be primarily met through the use of the One-Stop service centers where ex-offenders training and employment skill deficiencies will be dealt with and individuals will be matched with employers in the area where they live.

## WIA Dollars continued

(Continued from page 1)

### Youth distribution put on fast track due to short timeframe

The annual Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth funds were put on the fast track after the funding allotments for states were announced and a funding availability date of April 1, 2001, was established. Though Florida's WIA youth services funds actually increased this year (3 percent), the federally mandated sub-state distribution formulas did not allow for a simple uniform increase for each of Florida's 24 regional boards. Youth funds allotted to the state must be passed through to the regions based on distribution formulas designated in federal law with some weighting flexibility allowed to the state and exercised in Florida's WIA 5-year plan.

After the allocation, the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) began working vigorously to run the necessary formula calculations for "sub-state" allotments. The primary formula factors mandated by federal law are based on relative levels of unemployment, "Substantial Unemployment" or "Excess Unemployment." Workforce staff soon discovered that "straight" application of the federal formula factors would have resulted in very dramatic swings in funding for many regions, exceeding 10 percent in some areas.

Federal law requires a "hold-harmless" stop-loss mechanism must be applied if any region would be required to take a loss of 10 percent or more compared to their average funding level for the previous two years. By applying the hold harmless, the result was no region having to take a loss of over 5 percent compared to the prior year funding.

### Florida has reduction in adult funding

On March 30, the 24 regions were notified of their allotment of WIA adult and dislocated workers allocations for the next fiscal year beginning July 1, 2001. Florida received a 3.8 percent reduction in the adult and dislocated worker funding over last fiscal year. The state reduction resulted in all regions receiving less money for fiscal year 2001.

To minimize the fund reductions, regions will benefit from several WFI policies and practices, including deobligation/reallocation of surplus funds at both mid-year and end of the year; an ongoing process for regions to request and document the need for supplemental Dislocated Worker funds from the state "reserve"; and, a mid-year distribution of unused "reserve" dislocated worker funds.

### Key points to fiscal year 2001 WIA funds:

- ➔ Florida had a decrease in WIA funds.
- ➔ No region had a greater than 10 percent reduction in WIA dollars.
- ➔ Regions should have received fund distribution for both youth and adult WIA dollars.
- ➔ Youth funds became available on April 1, 2001.
- ➔ Adult and dislocated worker funds will not be available until July 1, 2001.

## Calendar May – August 2001

**May 23, 2001**

**PARTNERS' MEETING**

1:00–5:00 p.m.

Embassy Suites Hotel

Orlando, FL

**May 24, 2001**

**FULL BOARD MEETING**

Embassy Suites Hotel

Orlando, FL

**JUNE 9–12, 2001**

**WORKFORCE SUMMIT**

Tampa Marriott Waterside

Tampa, FL

**June 13, 2001**

**EXECUTIVE TELECONFERENCE**

**JULY 11, 2001**

**EXECUTIVE TELECONFERENCE**

**AUGUST 8, 2001**

**PARTNERS' MEETING**

Embassy Suites Hotel

Orlando, FL

**AUGUST 9, 2001**

**FULL BOARD MEETING**

Embassy Suites Hotel

Orlando, FL

### **Next Issue:**

- ◆ Review of May Board Meeting Actions
- ◆ Report on GAO Visits in Florida
- ◆ Fiscal Year 2001-2002 Budget Outlook

***For updates and agendas, visit us at:***

***[www.workforceflorida.com](http://www.workforceflorida.com)***



325 John Knox Road  
Building 200  
Tallahassee, FL 32303

***Workforce Vision: Florida will develop a globally competitive workforce.***

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