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New test matches work skills with jobs

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A new employee-credentialing program that helps businesses take the guesswork out of hiring is being introduced to employers statewide. Florida Ready to Work, sponsored by the state and free to jobseekers and employers, is a workforce recruitment tool that tests and scores job skills and work habits.

The program allows businesses to define the skills they are seeking and recruit jobseekers who have those skills. Schools can tailor programs to help jobseekers fill gaps in their skills and become more competitive in the job market, said Jeanine Blomberg, Florida's education commissioner.

To earn the Florida Ready to Work credential, a jobseeker must take three assessments and score at least a three on each: applied mathematics, reading for information and locating information. These assessments test the communication and problem-solving skills that are required for 85 percent of all jobs today from entry-level to professional, a release said.

ACT, a national company best known for the ACT college admissions test, is developing the testing program. Florida Ready to Work offers an optional work habits assessment measuring workplace attitude, behavior and customer service skills and online courses to help jobseekers build their skills. The program also has a network of trained job profilers, a service that helps employers pinpoint the most important skills required by a specific job and then match those skills with potential employees.

Florida joins more than 40 other states in introducing this new program, making the Florida Ready to Work credential portable across industry, occupation and the country. More than 250,000 credentials have been issued nationwide to date.

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