

The Daily Commercial

Program aimed to help jobseekers

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The State of Florida has joined 30 other states in offering the Florida Ready to Work (RTW) to jobseekers. Now, Lake County is part of that process with the assistance of the Learning Center at Lake-Sumter Community College. It has also joined 30 other states in making the results available to prospective employers and those industries seeking to locate or relocate to the state and, specifically, Lake County.

RTW is a proctored assessment which measures the jobseeker's skills in applied mathematics, locating information, and reading for information. The questions are phrased in a problem solving manner and, as in the workplace, the person testing can use a calculator and/or work the problems on paper. There is also an optional work habits assessment. The tests also measure communication, reasoning, and problem solving skills needed in today's workforce - from entry level to professional. Once the assessments are completed successfully, the jobseeker receives a certificate from the governor and is able to state that they passed at a bronze, a silver, or at the highest level of gold on their application or resume.

Debbie Fontaine, human resources manager at RTW sponsor Silver Springs Citrus, Inc. and a member of the HR Florida State Council is excited about the RTW credential coming to Lake County. "I view it as a valuable resource for candidates who wish to give themselves an edge, for current employees who want to advance, and for employers who wish to use this test not only as a part of their selection criteria, but also for building existing teams," states Ms. Fontaine. "We just needed testing sites in Lake County so that we can access this test and help others take advantage of this opportunity. The fact that it's free and that people can receive remediation makes it the most accessible and practical program I've ever seen for promoting workforce readiness."

The assessment process begins when an applicant is registered by a credentialed administrator at the test site. Then the applicant can work at home or anywhere there is computer access by using a password, provided by RTW, to enter additional registration information and take a pre-placement assessment. In order to proceed and take the RTW assessment, the person must score at least 80 percent on the pre-placement tests. If the person scores less, a self-paced computerized remediation is available. After successful completion, the applicant goes back to the test site to take the RTW assessment in a proctored environment.

Lake-Sumter Community College has recently become an assessment center for the RTW credentialing process. The assessment, available in computerized or paper/pencil version, is given by appointment only. It can be given on an individual basis or in groups, during day or evening hours. In order to learn more about the test and to register, please call the LSCC Learning Center at 352-365-3224.

Want to learn more? The Florida Department of Education has developed a website, www.floridareadytowork.com <<http://www.floridareadytowork.com>> , which provides information for both

employers and jobseekers. If you are an employer and would like more information about utilizing this assessment in your selection criteria and in becoming an Employer Partner, please contact RTW Project Coordinator Kathy Fletcher, at 888-717-9461 or 877-444-4505.

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