

3. Workforce Talent By Janet Ware - 9/21/2010

Florida's workforce — 9 million strong and 4th largest in the U.S. — is one of the nation's best qualified and most culturally diverse. No Floridian lives more than 50 miles from an institution of postsecondary learning, and the number of Floridians with associate, bachelor and advanced degrees has increased at almost double the national rate since 2000; Florida is 11th among all states for workers with advanced degrees. In addition, Florida ranks 6th among U.S. states in the number of international students; 30,400 students from outside the U.S. were enrolled at Florida colleges and universities in the 2008-2009 academic year.

Florida's labor pool is particularly strong in high-tech industries and international trade. According to TechAmerica's 2010 Cyberstates report, Florida ranks 4th among America's largest cyberstates with a total of 24,500 high-tech companies employing 292,300 high-tech workers and a payroll of \$19.9 billion in 2008 (most recent data). In addition, international business supports nearly 1.2 million — roughly one in seven — Florida jobs.

One of Florida's greatest assets is the multiplicity of its labor pool. More than 3.2 million Florida residents were born outside the U.S., and 4.4 million are speakers of languages other than English. Best represented are speakers of Spanish (3.2 million), Indo-European languages (865,000), and Asia and Pacific Islander languages (239,000).

The demand for skilled labor in Florida is answered by many training programs designed to meet the needs of the state's leading industries. Customized programs and incentives, such as Quick Response Training, Incumbent Worker Training and the industry-specific Banner Centers, provide skilled labor to employers in less time and at lower costs.

Companies that choose Florida for startup, expansion or relocation will find a fully coordinated system of workforce services to fill their needs. Under the "Employ Florida" umbrella are two partners at the state level: Workforce Florida Inc., which oversees and monitors the administration of the state's workforce policy, programs and services, and the Agency for Workforce Innovation, which administers workforce funds, houses the Office of Labor Market Statistics and serves as the designated U.S. Census data center for Florida. At the local level, 24 regional workforce boards with significant business representation implement workforce programs in their communities, including the oversight of nearly 100 One-Stop Centers across the state, where services are delivered directly to employers and job

seekers.

For the second time in 2010, CNBC rated Florida's workforce No. 1 in the nation on its annual America's Top States for Business rankings, and considering the emphasis this state puts on preparing a qualified workforce, it's no surprise. Florida was among the first states to recognize the link between early childhood education and workplace success by incorporating a voluntary pre-kindergarten (VPK) program into its statewide public school system. Within the statewide K-12 system, workforce preparation is pivotal; reading and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) are curriculum priorities.

By 2014, 15 of the 20 fastest-growing jobs in America will require substantial math or science preparation, according to the U.S. Department of Labor; Florida is wasting no time bringing its workforce up to par. Under new high school graduation requirements signed into law in 2010, high school students will be required to take tougher science and math courses — and pass end-of-course exams — to earn their diplomas. Every school district in Florida has at least one high school-based career and professional academy, where completion of the rigorous academic curriculum can mean a standard high school diploma, the highest available industry certifications and, in some cases, college credits. High school diplomas in Florida must show a student's specific major area of interest, as well as designations for completion of accelerated college credit courses, career education certification and, when applicable, the Florida Ready to Work Credential, which assures employers that he/she has the skills needed for successful on-the-job performance.

Whether preparing young people for further education or direct entry into the workforce, or helping adults acquire the skills they need to assume new jobs in clean energy, life sciences, information technology or other fast-growing industry sectors, Florida's 28 state and community colleges play a critical role in workforce readiness. More than 845,000 students are served annually by Florida's state and community colleges at 61 campuses and 176 sites.

Stetson University in DeLand was Florida's first private university and the first to offer a School of Business Administration and a College of Law.

Florida's state and community colleges offer nearly 800 associate of arts, associate of science and associate of applied science degrees and about 500 certificate programs; 14 of the 28 schools are approved to offer baccalaureate degrees in fields such as nursing, teacher education, information technology and health services administration. For the 8th year

in a row, Florida community colleges ranked among America's top degree producers, awarding more than 52,000 associate degrees during the 2008-2009 academic year.

Florida is home to 11 public universities where enrollment tops 300,000; another 120,000 students attend private, independent colleges and universities. The state boasts six major medical schools, two of which — at the University of Central Florida and at Florida International University — opened in fall 2009. Beginning in fall 2011, Florida Atlantic University and Scripps Florida will combine forces to offer a joint M.D./Ph.D. program. And four of the top five on *Bloomberg Businessweek's* ranking of undergraduate business programs offering the best return on investment — annual tuition spent compared to median base salary at graduation — are in Florida: University of Central Florida, University of Florida, Florida International University and Florida State University.

Florida's universities and colleges not only produce some of the world's most talented, highly skilled professionals, they also rank among the nation's top performers of research and development and play a vital role in commercializing key advanced technologies. In 2008, researchers at Florida's 13 largest universities received \$1.86 billion in research funding from outside sources, up \$68.6 million from 2007.

For more specific details about workforce services, incentives and training programs available to Florida employers, visit www.Workforceflorida.Com.

The Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF) is an association of 28 private, accredited and not-for-profit schools that are Florida-based. With more than 120,000 students and classes at 108 sites throughout the state, ICUF schools turn out one-third of all college degrees awarded in Florida, including 26% of bachelor's degrees and 56% of first professional degrees (doctors, lawyers, dentists, pharmacists and optometrists).

Six of Florida's colleges and universities were ranked among the nation's best in *U.S. News & World Report's* 2011 edition of "America's Best Colleges." University of Miami ranked No. 47 on the overall Best National Universities list, along with the University of Florida at No. 53. Among Best Regional Universities in the South, Rollins College in Winter Park took the No. 1 position; on that same list were Stetson University in DeLand at No. 3, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Melbourne at No. 10 and the University of Tampa at No. 26. In addition, 15 Florida colleges and universities are among The *Princeton Review's* list of 133 Best Southeastern Colleges.

Additional educational options are available at career schools and for-profit colleges where classes tend to be small and the curriculum heavily career focused.

At a Glance: Florida Education

Public Schools (K-12)	4,337
Average Teacher Salary (K-12)	\$46,938
Pre-K-12 Enrollment	2,643,382
Pre-K-12 Per-Student State and Local Funding	\$6,959
State Universities	11
State and Community Colleges	28
Independent Colleges & Universities of Florida (ICUF)	28
Non-Public Postsecondary Schools (including technical and trade schools)	921
Public Technical and Trade Schools	44