

ASK THE EXPERT >>

Skilled Workers Still Hard to Find

Florida Ready to Work helps companies identify talent and reduce costs.



identified by employers across industries as critical for job success. Proctored assessments validate mastery of skills. Those who complete the program earn the Florida Ready to Work Credential, providing proof that the participant has the core skills needed to get the job done. Florida Ready to Work is supported by the HR Florida State Council, Florida Chamber of Commerce and other industry groups statewide. There is no cost to participate.

will impact our industry sooner. It's the silver tsunami," says Jennifer Grove, workforce development coordinator for Gulf Power. "We must prepare our current workforce to transfer their knowledge to the new generation of workers and at the same time develop the pipeline of talent for the future."

"Many outside of our industry do not realize that the applied math, reading and problem-solving skills required for entry into most of our occupations are just as high as entry into college. Florida Ready to Work provides us a foundational assessment that tells us if a person has the skills required to perform in our current jobs and to continue to learn and grow into advanced technical and leadership positions," says Grove.

The program also provides a more immediate return for participating employers like Gulf Power and its parent company, Southern Company.

"We have profiled many of our entry-level positions within Southern Company, and we see a direct correlation between the Gold Credential and an applicant's ability to pass our industry pre-employment test," says Grove. "Since embedding Florida Ready to Work and its counterpart in other Southern Company states into our talent development pipeline programs, we have significantly reduced our pre-employment testing, remedial training costs and turnover."

Even with close to 1 million Floridians looking for work, employers in manufacturing, energy, health care and other projected growth industries are challenged to fill open positions.

"Even though we would like to hire people who are currently unemployed, our experience has been that many of those applicants do not have the basic skills. We provide training, but they must be work ready," says Maria Lang, senior manager human resources for the Aerostructures Division of Kaman Aerospace Corporation, employing 400 people in Jacksonville.

Florida Ready to Work is one of the tools that Kaman uses to identify qualified new hires.

An EEOC compliant training and hiring program, Florida Ready to Work offers online courseware in nine foundational skill areas

Gulf Power has tapped into Florida Ready to Work to support talent development.

Gulf Power Company is a leading energy company headquartered in Pensacola and serving more than 428,000 customers in 71 communities across the Florida Panhandle. With 1,365 employees and nearly \$1.1 billion invested in its facilities, Gulf Power is an economic engine for the region where talent development is a shared company and community priority.

"On average, the energy industry workforce is four years older than the broader workforce, so we know that the baby boom generation exodus



Jennifer Landrum Grove
Workforce Development
Coordinator, Gulf Power

Get more from your workforce. To learn more, visit www.floridareadytowork.com or call Sharon Albrecht, Florida Ready to Work business services director, at 1-877-444-4505 prompt 1.