

Agency for Workforce Innovation

Monthly Accomplishments for January 2009

January 30, 2009

This monthly report is the culmination of activities at the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) for January 2009. The accomplishments contained herein are directly linked to the Agency's Priorities as listed in the AWI Top-to-Bottom Review (May 2007). These priorities are as follows:

- 1. Building a culture that embraces and fully integrates all of our Agency services.**
- 2. Increasing awareness about all of the services we provide: "Telling Our Story."**
- 3. Eliminating duplicated services and improving partnerships.**
- 4. Enhancing accountability and integrity.**

1. Building a culture that embraces and fully integrates all of our Agency services

Workforce Services

- Expanded the Agency team that supports the Governor's Commission on Disabilities to include representation from Unemployment Compensation, Office of Early Learning, Disabled Veteran Program, and One-Stop Policy/Monitoring unit.

Office of General Counsel

- Office of General Counsel (OGC) staff participated in a meeting with Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI) to discuss Unemployment Compensation (UC) applications and assistance to applicants.

2. Increased awareness about all of the services we provide: "Telling Our Story"

Director's Office

- Director Brown and Agency staff participated in the following events in January:
 - The Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet Meeting;
 - A teleconference with Department of Elder Affairs' Secretary Doug Beach, committee chairs and lead staff, regarding progress on the National Governors Association's project on civic engagement, older workers and Florida employers;
 - A Workforce Florida Inc. (WFI), Youth Opportunities Committee teleconference;
 - The WorkForce Plus Job Fair at the Leon County Civic Center with Governor Crist;
 - The Florida Commission on Human Relations' 40th Anniversary Press Conference;
 - Florida Credential Meeting with Florida State University and AWI's Office of Early Learning;
 - Enterprise Florida Inc.'s (EFI) Stakeholders Council Meeting, including the Rural Working Group, the Legislative Policy Committee and the EFI Board Meeting;
 - A collaboration-building teleconference with the Florida Chamber's Innovation Caucus, which included panelists from Florida State University, University of Florida, Georgia Tech and several capital venture companies;
 - WFI/AWI leadership meeting focused on the WFI/AWI performance contract;
 - US Department of Labor's Reemployment Summit in Baltimore, Maryland.

Workforce Services

- Workforce Services revised One-Stop and Program Support program handouts for use with external partners, potential Agency customers and at conferences and professional meetings;
- The Military Family Employment Advocate in Miami/Dade (Regional Workforce Board 23) was recognized for outstanding service by the United States Marine Corps Forces South, Employment Readiness Program Manager and the Commander, 482nd Fighter Wing, Homestead Air Reserve Base.

Legislative Affairs

- The Office of Legislative Affairs conducted seven meetings with state Senators and Representatives in an effort to increase awareness of the Agency's services and update the legislators on current Agency news. Those visits included meetings with the following:
 - Senator J.D. Alexander
 - Senator Ronda Storms
 - Senator Stephen Wise
 - Representative Steve Crisafulli
 - Representative Greg Evers
 - Representative Brad Drake
 - Representative Dorothy Hukill

Office of Early Learning

- **Special Session** - During the 2009 Special Session the Office of Early Learning worked closely with several staff including those from the Governor's Office, the House and the Senate Pre-K-12 Appropriations committees. This hard work was realized when the legislature made minimal changes to VPK and asked the Agency to identify efficiencies while still maintaining a high-quality prekindergarten experience.
- **Orange County Child Care Provider Meeting with Senator Siplin** - Staff attended a provider meeting sponsored by Senator Gary Siplin in Orlando, Florida. The providers in attendance requested the meeting to obtain answers regarding the budget reductions to the School Readiness program and how to keep their business thriving. The providers were also seeking to understand the collaboration of the implementing Agencies in Florida's early learning system.

Office of General Counsel (OGC)

- OGC staff reviewed the Agency's 2008 Annual Loss Prevention Program report and prepared the Report on Agency Publications for 2008 as well as the Agency's Report on Commercial Entities Requesting Social Security Numbers under section 119.071, Florida Statutes.
- OGC staff responded to customer requests for information and/or answered questions regarding:
 - Use of National Emergency Grant funds
 - Dislocated Worker Program
 - Health Coverage Tax Credit Program
 - Translation services and non-English forms used by the Agency
 - Application of the Fair Labor Standards Act
 - Minimum Wage Notice enforcement
 - Implementation of Federal Alien Labor Regulations
 - The effect of political asylum on UC eligibility
 - Private section hiring practices

- Statutory authority to charge employers for UC taxes
- Release of various WARN notices provided by employers regarding staff reductions

3. Eliminating duplicated services, improving partnerships

Workforce Services

- In January, the Office of Workforce Services:
 - Met with the State Board's Workgroup assigned to the Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) program's automation project. This project is designed to help the regions connect the growing number of program participants with the resources afforded by the United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Florida. The Agency has begun automating the initial engagement process so that customers can log onto an automated system, review information, answer basic questions, select an activity and receive their next steps.
 - Identified potential grant opportunities and other resources and disseminated that information to Regional Workforce Boards on a weekly basis to assist in coordinating services and securing additional funds for local programs.
 - Conducted Welfare-to-Work Training Workshops focused on integrating the Welfare Transition program into the One-Stop system by offering activities and developing processes that move program participants from welfare to work.
 - Conducted a series of Internet-based training sessions for the Regional Workforce Boards that are involved in the expansion of the Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) program statewide.
 - Provided technical assistance to the 24 RWB partners regarding the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program.

Labor Market Statistics

- In January, the Labor Market Statistics Center:
 - Prepared an analysis of unemployment in the cities of Palm Beach County for the Regional Board to share with the Mayor of West Palm Beach; prepared an analysis of Citrus County historical data back to 1974; prepared an analysis of older workers for a media request; prepared an analysis of using prison labor for the Prison Industry Enhancement (PIE) program; analyzed unemployment data by race and gender for the media; provided construction analysis for a Governor's meeting on the housing industry;
 - Updated statistics for the rural database for the Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development (OTTED);
 - Provided Enterprise Florida, Inc. with data on businesses eligible by county for the Qualified Target Industry (QTI) program;
 - Prepared an updated aviation/aerospace industry profile for Workforce Florida, Inc. and for Workforce Plus in Tallahassee; prepared labor supply studies for Polk Works and several other central Florida regions;

- Prepared travel reports for elected officials based on their districts; worked on labor supply, graphics, and mapping for regional customers; estimated the timing for health care jobs for Florida's economic stimulus; and provided statistics to help with a National Emergency Grant (NEG) proposal from Florida;
- Assisted Council of 100 with job projections for legislative testimony;
- Conducted training in Polk County/Bartow on labor market information; hosted a job fair booth for Workforce Plus in Tallahassee; and finalized LMI training plans for Region 19 in Sebring;
- Met with President Chris Hart of Workforce Florida, Inc. on the process of identifying jobs in demand;
- Provided statistical data, career publications and Census information to local school districts, community colleges, workforce boards, and the general public.

Office of General Counsel (OGC)

- In January, the OGC:
 - Worked with the Department of Education's Office of General Counsel on summer Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) issues;

4. Enhancing accountability and integrity

Workforce Services

- In January, Workforce Services conducted:
 - **Data Validation Review** - Each year, the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) requires the state to conduct a data validation review of its workforce files, including the review of certain data elements in the case files of participants exiting from the workforce programs statewide. Workforce Services staff are currently conducting the data validation review of those records, which will be validated and submitted to USDOL by February 1, 2009 per federal requirements.
 - One on-site programmatic monitoring review, four data validation on-site reviews, and one special project review. The reviews were conducted to ensure the RWBs' and other service providers' compliance with the workforce programs' respective laws, regulations, state plans and contract and/or agreement terms.

Labor Market Statistics

- In January, the Labor Market Statistics Center:
 - Worked with the Florida Associations of Professional Employer Organizations (PEOs) and reviewed a draft on PEO legislation;
 - Prepared a transmittal on the new estimates review policy for the Atlanta region states;
 - Analyzed employment estimates review policies to determine that the sum-of-states employment equals the national total.

Unemployment Compensation (UC) Services

- In January, UC Services:
 - Continued to handle a record volume of claims
 - The number of claims filed in Calendar Year 2008 totaled 1,356,976.
 - CY 2008 claims increased 102.4% compared to the CY 2007 total of 670,278.
 - Claims filed in the past six months totaled just fewer than one million (925,596) and represents an increase of 154.3% compared to the same six-month 2007 total of 363,920.
 - As a result of the federal extension of the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) on November 21, 2008, the Agency mailed 99,252 EUC Reachback notices in December to individuals potentially eligible for additional benefits.
 - As of the quarter ending September 30, 2008, the most recent data available, 87 percent of eligible claims are paid within 14 days of the first payable week, which meets the guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Labor.
 - The Agency has been setting records in the history of the Florida UC program including:
 - 87,310 claims processed in one week during week ending January 17, 2009;
 - 35,043 claims processed in one day on January 22, 2009;
 - \$85,680,381 - amount of benefits paid during week ending January 17, 2009;
 - \$329,168,279 - amount of benefits paid in December 2008 - a 210.4% increase compared to the December 2007 total of \$106,079,852;
 - \$2,246,967,101 - amount of benefits paid in 2008. (\$1,840,364,522 paid in regular state benefits, \$406,514,316 paid in EUC benefits and \$88,263 paid in Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) for Tropical Storm Fay.) This is a 97.7% increase compared to the CY 2007 total of \$1,136,224,924.
 - Agency staff is working seven days per week to handle and process claims.
 - Agency staff is continually monitoring online systems to ensure customers are able to file their claims in a timely, efficient manner.

Office of Early Learning (OEL)

- The Office of Early Learning's Accountability Unit will start file reviews for the United States Department of Health and Human Services' (USDHHS) Improper Authorization for Payment Review this month. Regulations were adopted in September 2007 to implement this study for all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, on a triennial basis.

Office of the General Counsel (OGC)

- In January, the OGC:
 - Responded to 65 public records requests; filed 6 Motions for Protective Orders; filed Satisfactions in 3 UC benefits overpayment collections and responded to 23 foreclosure notices. Staff also reviewed 5 employee personnel actions and 1 Civil Rights Complaint response, and assisted in drafting and/or reviewing 45 Agency contracts.

- Prepared correspondence regarding improper use of the Agency's logo and assisted in reviewing Agency security breach activities, including the requirement for using social security numbers for UC records and data-sharing with Regional Workforce Boards.
- Responded to questions from Office of Early Learning (OEL) staff regarding:
 - Rule interpretation and development
 - Options for dealing with low performing providers
 - Responsibility of Early Learning Coalitions (ELCs) to respond to public records requests
 - Whether a coalition may respond to another ELC's Request For Proposal
 - Conflicts of interest
 - Equal Opportunity issues
 - Employment ethics question
 - Ability of providers to charge for VPK absences
 - ELC's request to amend a provider agreement
 - Transitional child care eligibility for school readiness services
 - Contracting with a private entity to provide a summer VPK program
- Reviewed and assisted with revisions to Agency Policy 4.09 (Records Management Procedures); provided guidance on variance & waiver procedures; reviewed several OEL monitoring reports, including local ELCs and the Agency's Six Month Audit Response; and reviewed standard levels of service in preparation for rule development.
- OGC staff advised or assisted Workforce staff regarding a number of issues, including:
 - Retention of electronic mail
 - Responding to a hearing request from a Workforce Investment Act participant
 - Advising a Regional Workforce Board (RWB) on dealing with hazards created by individuals using their property for skateboarding activities
 - Responding to federal monitoring findings
 - Drafting proposed revisions to the Agency's policy on positions of special trust
 - Responding to questions regarding a federal requirement to implement electronic verification of workers' eligibility
 - Questions about requirements for on-the-job training contracts between RWBs and businesses
 - Preparing the Quarterly Deliverables Report for WFI
- Assistance was provided to UC staff as follows:
 - Response to a question about sealing portions of UC records pursuant to a Court Order
 - Legal Opinion on interface and functionality of UC online application process
 - What UC information the Agency can share with RWBs, and the Email address to which RWBs may refer questions from UC claimants
 - Response to a claimant's request to remove negative employer comments from UC records
 - Advising whether UC funds may be used to obtain information relating to Workforce programs
 - Response to proposed call center outsourcing questions

Office of the Inspector General (OIG)

- In January, the OIG:
 - Opened four new projects that were referred to other AWI programs or process partners.

- Completed two investigations with associated reports, continued work on a whistleblower investigation and conducted investigative inquiry activities for a complaint about a program contract;
- Participated in accreditation planning meetings with other agency offices of inspector general;
- Convened one Agency Incident Response Team meeting to conclude follow-up to the Agency's information breach.
- Internal Audit Projects:
 - Issued a comprehensive six month status report on the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program Audit conducted by the Auditor General;
 - Prepared monthly reports of Tracked Audit Findings, Potential Audit Liability, and External Reviews and Audits;
 - Issued Management Decisions (OIG written reviews of audit reports submitted by independent certified public accountants) for two agency sub-recipients;
 - Prepared a quarterly report of activities (October 2008 through December 2008) for the Chief Inspector General.
- Other Activities:
 - The Audit Unit participated in 55 hours of Continuing Professional Education in the field of accounting and auditing (these hours were obtained from three training sessions and attendance at the Association of Government Accountant's monthly meeting).
 - The Inspector General attended a meeting of all inspectors general called by the Chief Inspector General to review Information Technology Security issues and finalize the Inspectors General accreditation processes. A presentation was made by staff from the Agency for Enterprise Information Technology.

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