

Agency for Workforce Innovation

Monthly Accomplishments for October 2008

October 31, 2008

This monthly report is the culmination of activities at the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) for October 2008. 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.
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1. Building a culture that embraces and fully integrates all of our Agency services

Workforce Services

- **Small Business Recovery Grant** - The Agency was successful in obtaining a waiver of federal rules to allow the use of the recently awarded National Emergency Grant (NEG) to help small businesses recover from Tropical Storm Fay and get affected employees back to work. The Florida Small Business Recovery Grant Program provides small businesses with a grant up to \$5,000 to replace equipment such as computers and other capital assets damaged by the storm.
- **Direct Services** - Workforce Services staff continued to work with Regional Workforce Boards (RWB) to modify local requirements as a result of the RWBs electing to provide direct services now allowed as a result of passage of SB 428. (SB 428 was passed in the 2008 legislative session, and allows RWBs to directly administer workforce services at One Stop Career Centers. Prior to SB 428, such services were provided by private vendors.) The review of plan amendments and modifications was coordinated with Workforce Florida, Inc.

Unemployment Compensation

- **Emergency Unemployment Compensation** - On June 30, 2008, President Bush signed H.R. 2642 creating Public Law 110-252, establishing the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program, which provides up to 13 weeks of extended unemployment compensation benefits in all states to qualified individuals. Individuals can apply for EUC until March 28, 2009. The last payable week is July 4, 2009.
- **Emergency Unemployment Compensation Stats** – Between July 1 and October 22, 2008, Unemployment Compensation Services has:
 - Processed a total of 176,712 EUC claims
 - Issued \$258,345,779 in benefits to 139,136 qualified individuals
 - Provided EUC applications to 470,124 potentially eligible individuals

- Responded to 10,000 telephone inquiries each day
- **Unemployment Compensation Filing Tips** - Unemployment Compensation claimants have the option to file claims by Internet at www.fluidnow.com, by phone at (800) 204-2418 or by mail. Hours of operation, including Call Center hours, have been extended to 7:30 AM - 7 PM Monday – Friday and from 8 AM – 4 PM on Saturdays.

General Counsel

- The Office of General Counsel assisted in responding to 23 inquiries regarding eligibility requirements for temporary workers, use of National Emergency Grant funds for small business recovery, and Emergency Unemployment Compensation funds following Tropical Storm Fay.

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

Workforce Services

- The Agency’s Deputy Emergency Coordinating Officer provided an overview of Agency programs and emergency response services during a quarterly meeting of State Emergency Coordination Officers. The meeting attendees also toured the Agency’s Mobile One-Stop Unit to review the various features used during the unit’s emergency services deployment.
- Welfare Transition staff attended and participated in the Administration of Children and Families and Office of Family Assistance Tri-Regional TANF-CCDF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Child Care and Development Fund) Technical Assistance Conference. Staff spoke on “Engaging Employers to Employ and Support TANF Clients”.
- Wagner Peyser staff prepared and submitted four On-Line Project Communications to Geographic Solutions (the state contractor for developing and managing the Employment Services and Case Management System) that were implemented to improve the overall operation of the Employ Florida Marketplace system for staff and customers.

Legislative Affairs

- The Office of Legislative Affairs conducted nine visits to legislative offices in an effort to increase awareness of the Agency's services and update legislators on current Agency news. Those visits included seven meetings with State Representatives and two meetings with State Senators.

Office of the Director

- **During October, Director Brown:**
 - Participated in the Governor’s Workforce Accelerator Think Tank dedicated to workforce solutions, which was hosted by the Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development.

- Attended the Annual Meeting & State of the State Summit in Orlando, presented by the Florida Chamber of Commerce. The event was an opportunity for stakeholders to come together with business and community leaders from around the state to get involved and help prepare and strategize for the 2009 Legislative Session, receive reports and analysis on Florida's economic outlook & critical issues facing our state and to help the Chamber launch Florida's 2009 Business Agenda.
- Represented Florida on a plenary panel at the Direct Employers' Association Annual meeting in Nevada. The other states on the panel were California and Texas. A representative from Disney World accompanied Director Brown on the panel as an example of a company that Florida has a strong, ongoing public-private relationship with.
- Participated in a Florida Job Creation panel at the Enterprise Florida Stakeholder Council meeting in St. Petersburg, where she discussed initiatives to support job creation including:
 - Direct Job Creation
 - Job Creation Support Activities
 - World-Class Talent Pool
 - Customized Employer Services
 - Employer-Based Financial Incentives
- Conducted a meeting with Executive Director of WorkNet Pinellas and visited several One-Stop Career Centers to discuss their local services and current needs.
- Participated in the Enterprise Florida (EFI) board meeting as a board member.
- Served as luncheon speaker at the Florida Bar's Labor and Employment Section Seminar in Orlando, and focused on public employment issues.
- Was a guest speaker at the *YOU ARE A FLORIDA TREND STAR* luncheon sponsored by For Young Leaders Only (FYLO), a United Way of the Big Bend outreach program.
- Participated with Senator Wise in a State of Florida/Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) Florida Workforce Partnership Meeting. Hiring and training needs of HCA's facilities in Florida were discussed, along with potential partnerships with Florida Agencies and engagement with local Workforce Boards.
- Participated in Workforce Florida Inc.'s Executive Committee Teleconference in which Food Stamp Employment and Training Program (FSETP) allocations were discussed.
- Participated in the National Governors' Association (NGA) Project with the Florida NGA Team at the Department of Elder Affairs. The project involves initiatives for civic engagement of older adults.

- Hosted the Annual Agency for Workforce Innovation's Fall Festival, with all proceeds going to benefit the Florida State Employees' Charitable Campaign.
- Deputy Director Cynthia Lorenzo joined the Governor, statewide business leaders and state agency heads in a Disability Employment Awareness Celebration at City Hall in Tallahassee. Businesses throughout Florida were recognized and celebrated for employing persons with disabilities.
- Agency Senior Staff participated in the Florida Chamber of Commerce Innovation Caucus meeting held at the Seminole County School Board offices in Sanford. Caucus stakeholders toured three magnet schools that focus on science, technology, engineering and math. The three schools visited were Sanford Middle School, and Seminole and Crooms High Schools.

Office of Early Learning

- **Policy Group for Florida's Families and Children** - Dr. Brittany Birken, Director of The Office of Early Learning (OEL), spoke at a Policy Group for Florida's Families and Children meeting on October 29th. She discussed OEL services administered by the Agency, shared priorities for OEL programs and services, and to discussed partnership opportunities. The Policy Group is an independent, analytical entity that develops and supports public policies grounded in evidence-based research that promote the well-being of children and families.

General Counsel

- The Office of General Counsel researched and assisted in preparing documents announcing Florida's new minimum wage.

3. Eliminating duplicated services and improving partnerships

Workforce Services

- One Stop Program Support staff represented the agency at a Prison Re-Entry Advisory Council Committee Meeting at Representative Kurt Kelly's Office. The committee discussed several topics of interest including ways to expand the PRIDE program's services to more inmates. Also committee members worked on several strategy papers that will be presented to the full council for consideration.
- The Agency is continuing to work with the Florida Division of Emergency Management and Volunteer Florida to provide temporary workers to support emergency response activities related to Tropical Storm Fay.
- Agency representatives continued to work with the Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) workgroup on developing funding and program strategies for the new federal fiscal year that began October 1, 2008.
- One Stop and Program Support staff participated in the Geographic Solutions Inc. "Train the Trainer" training for the Regional Workforce Boards and

contracted Banner Center and Displaced Homemaker staff. The training was held to introduce staff to the new Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Generic participant tracking modules. The rollout of these modules will eliminate duplicative data systems by incorporating both the TAA and generic cases in the Employ Florida Marketplace.

Labor Market Statistics

- **During October, the Labor Market Statistics Center:**
 - Calculated Florida's new minimum wage effective January 2009 and updated the announcement documents in English and Spanish; posted to the Agency website on October 15 as required by state law; and worked with the Department of Revenue to provide a flyer notifying all employers.
 - Prepared materials for the Governor's Office on minority workers for an Opportunity Conference.
 - Met with and trained staff from the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget on the labor market information program.
 - Prepared statistical reports on the job market in preparation for the the Governor's Workforce Accelerator Think Tank dedicated to workforce solutions.
 - Worked on the preliminary 2009-10 Florida Career and Professional Education certification list based on occupational codes and demand.
 - Produced a special report on community and social service occupational wages for Florida and various South Florida Counties for the Florida Department of Management Services and the Department of Elder Affairs.
 - Assisted Enterprise Florida, Inc. with labor statistics on industries gaining and losing jobs.
 - Prepared an LMI data graphic by featured region for the Florida Economic Development Council (FEDC) to use in quarterly newsletters.

Office of Early Learning

- **Early Childhood Education Professional Development Initiative Steering Committee** - The Office of Early Learning sponsored a meeting of the *Early Care and Education Professional Development Initiative*. The interagency partnership initiative focuses on collaborative efforts to develop a comprehensive professional development system for early learning practitioners in Florida. The October 16-17 meeting was attended by early childhood professionals from around the state including Agency partners (the Department of Education, Department of Children and Families), community college faculty, early childhood consultants, statewide early childhood associations, and other stakeholders.

4. Enhancing accountability and integrity

Workforce Services

- In working with other agency partners to establish a consistent and uniform agency wide administrative approach to both programmatic and fiscal monitoring, Workforce Services monitoring staff finalized its monitoring process for Program Year 2008-09.
- The first of 12 on-site programmatic monitoring reviews was conducted during October. The reviews are conducted to ensure Regional Workforce Boards' (RWBs) and other service providers' compliance with the workforce programs' respective laws, regulations, state plans and contract and/or agreement terms. Technical assistance on program practices and processes was also provided during the on-site review.
- The Agency worked with a workgroup with Workforce Florida, Inc. and regional workforce board representation to finalize an incentive policy to reward regional workforce boards for exemplary services to Veterans. The policy was approved and incentive awards issued to those regional workforce boards that met their negotiated performance standards for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008.

Labor Market Statistics

- Labor Market Statistics trained staff from the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget and a State Board member on the labor market information program.

Office of Early Learning

- **Early Learning Financing and Budget Briefing** - A representative group of early learning coalition executive directors and children's services councils participated in a day-long training on the early learning finance system on October 20th.
- **Florida Afterschool Network (FAN)** - The mission of FAN is to provide unified leadership to advocate for the development, enhancement and sustainability of innovative, high quality afterschool programs and policies statewide. The Florida Afterschool Network joined a national initiative dedicated to afterschool programs with funding in 2005 by the Mott Foundation. As a key partner in ensuring school-aged children are served in quality programs, OEL partners with FAN. In October, OEL staff participated in a meeting hosted by the FAN in Tampa to assist in finalizing an assessment instrument developed for afterschool providers to use to ensure their programs meet quality standards.

Office of the General Counsel (OGC)

- OGC Legal staff assisted with correspondence and a Trust Fund Release and Disbursement Agreement related to recovery of disallowed costs, responded to program staff question regarding insurance requirements for contracts supporting the Ready-to-Work program, and responded to an inquiry

regarding Florida's concealed weapons law as it relates to electronic weapons,.

- OGC Legal staff filed eight Motions for Protective Orders in response to records subpoenas, filed three Answers to Foreclosure notices, and 13 Satisfactions of Judgment in Small Claims Court. Responses were provided to questions regarding deduction of child support payments from UC benefits, release of UC derived employer data, alleged misrepresentation by an employer in a UC appeals hearing, and reporting possible fraud against a UC claimant to law enforcement.
- OGC Legal staff responded to questions regarding coalition board composition, whether coalitions can require providers to submit periodic progress reports, tax exemptions under Gold Seal, whether a coalition may endorse another organization, variance and waiver rule provisions, applicability of the federal Hatch Act, and the Sunshine Law.

Inspector General

- The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) opened three new projects; from the initial assessment and intake, the projects will result in one investigation; one inquiry and one referral.
- Investigations/Inquiries Reports:
 - During the month of October, the OIG completed one investigation and two inquiries relating to complaints.
 - In order to assist in ensuring compliance with Florida laws, the OIG participated in a meeting with the Office of Early Learning to discuss procurement requirements for early learning coalitions.
- Internal Audit Projects:
 - The Internal Audit Section verified the information reported by the Information Security Manager and the Chief Information Officer for the agency's 2008 Information Technology Risk Assessment Survey.
 - 54 Audit Plans for Early Learning Coalitions and Regional Workforce Boards were reviewed and approved.
 - Three management decisions (in-depth reviews of audit reports completed by certified public accountants) were issued involving one Early Learning Coalition and two other sub-recipients (counties).
 - The OIG prepared Reports relating to tracked audit findings, potential audit liability, and audits/reviews conducted by outside entities.
- Other Audit Activities:
 - A working exit conference was coordinated with the Auditor General in connection with the Unemployment Compensation – Information Technology (UC–IT) audit.

- The Audit Unit participated in 11 hours of Continuing Professional Education in the field of accounting and auditing (these hours were obtained from two training sessions offered by the Association of Inspectors General and Association of Government Accountants' monthly meetings).

Administration Services

- Administration Services submitted the Workforce Florida Inc. (WFI) Quarterly Deliverables Report update to WFI Liaison ahead of their deadline. The WFI Quarterly Deliverable Report is submitted to WFI as part of a contractual obligation of the Agency to deliver services to external customers according to the deliverables. The deliverable reports communicate to WFI that the Agency is providing the services as required.
- Administration Services completed and submitted the Statewide Financial Statements Compliance Checklist and the Subsequent Events Form, signed by the Controller, ahead of the Department of Financial Services' deadline. The Statewide Financial Compliance Checklist and Subsequent Events form keeps the Department of Financial Services aware of any discrepancies in the Agency's financial records ahead of time before there is an audit.

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