



**Charlie Crist**  
Governor

**Monesia T. Brown**  
Director

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
June 11, 2008

**CONTACT:** Chris Cate  
(850) 245-7130

**2008-09 BUDGET ENSURES CONTINUED SUPPORT OF EARLY LEARNING,  
UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION AND WORKFORCE SERVICES**

*~Priorities include strengthening early learning, enhancing workforce programs and supporting military families~*

**TALLAHASSEE** – Governor Charlie Crist today signed the budget for the 2008-09 Fiscal Year, providing the state’s early learning, unemployment compensation and workforce programs essential funds to support and enhance Florida’s economic prosperity.

“I commend Governor Crist, Lt. Governor Kottkamp, and the Legislature for this year’s budget, which demonstrates their continued commitment to strengthening Florida’s economy through developing world class talent and investing in early learning education and workforce training,” said Monesia T. Brown, Director of the Agency for Workforce Innovation.

**The 2008-09 Fiscal Year budget includes:**

- **\$354.3 million – Voluntary Prekindergarten Program:** Provides for the enrollment of an additional 10,000 children in the highly successful Voluntary Prekindergarten program.
- **\$20 million – Workforce Program:** Authorizes the use of additional federal funding to meet the increased demand for employment services.
- **\$7.1 million – Unemployment Compensation Program:** Authorizes the use of additional federal funding to address the increased number of unemployment claims.
- **\$1.5 million – Banner Centers:** Provides up-to-date training for workers in industries that are critical to sustaining and growing Florida’s diverse economy. The Banner Centers provide relevant curricula and training for entry-level and advanced workers who need to upgrade their skills and meet industry standards.
- **\$1.25 million – Aerospace Workforce Transition Program:** Provides retraining and retention programs for the highly skilled workforce displaced by the decommissioning of the Space Shuttle Program and the implementation of the Crew Exploration Vehicle (CEV) Program to enable Florida to retain its leadership position in these industries.

- **\$700,000 – Military Families:** Provides workforce services such as employment counseling, job search and placement assistance, information on educational and training programs and referral to supportive services to military spouses and families.

The Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) directly administers Early Learning, Labor Market Statistics, Unemployment Compensation and Workforce Service programs. Driven by the needs of Florida businesses, AWI partners with Workforce Florida, Inc. and a dynamic statewide system to offer high quality, comprehensive early learning and workforce services. Through 31 Early Learning Coalitions and 24 Regional Workforce Boards, as well as numerous other partnerships, AWI prepares Floridians today for the jobs of tomorrow.