

News Release



WorkNet Pinellas, Inc.
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Unemployed Worker Grant: Helping Individuals Get Back to Work Faster

CLEARWATER – WorkNet Pinellas has been awarded \$688,000 by the Agency for Workforce Innovation to implement the President’s Personal Re-employment Account (PRA) Initiative in Pinellas County. The State of Florida was selected by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration as one of seven states to pilot the PRA program. WorkNet Pinellas is one of two regions selected as a demonstration site within the state.

The purpose of the grant is to provide unemployed workers who are most likely to exhaust their unemployment compensation (UC) benefits with assistance and incentives to help them get back to work sooner and allow greater customer choice and flexibility. The program is designed to establish 200 personal re-employment accounts that will provide up to \$3,000 in unemployment assistance per eligible participant. Each account will be self-directed by the individual and may be used for training programs, support services, an employment bonus, or any combination of the three options.

WorkNet Pinellas Executive Director, Ed Peachey, states, “While PRA’s may not be the appropriate direction for everyone who is eligible for an account, we believe the program is a viable alternative for individuals in need of short-term skills upgrade training, additional money for childcare, transportation, or other support services during their job search. It is a welcome addition to our service delivery system.”

Second only to the District of Columbia, the State of Florida ranks among the highest states whose claimants exhaust their unemployment benefits prior to returning to work (USDOL). WorkNet Pinellas and program partner, Goodwill Industries-Suncoast, Inc., have proposed a system that provides early provision of services that are intended to shorten claimant unemployment duration and facilitate their return to productive, stable employment. According to Kris Rawson, Director of Workforce Programs with Goodwill Industries-Suncoast, Inc., “studies conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and the States have shown that the combination of early identification and referral to re-employment services has a positive impact on an individual’s ability to return to work quickly with stable employment”

To learn more about the PRA grant contact Rose Kelly at (727) 563-1324 or visit www.worknetpinellas.org.

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About WorkNet Pinellas

WorkNet Pinellas is the governing Workforce Board, Region 14, for Pinellas County. WorkNet Pinellas develops strategies to target the needs of employers then matches them to job seekers across the employment spectrum, from assisting those seeking entry level positions in the workforce to cultivating workers to fill coveted high skill/high demand positions. WorkNet Pinellas is a member of the Employ Florida statewide network of workforce services and resources. To locate any of the eight Pinellas County One Stop Centers visit www.worknetpinellas.org or call (727) 524-4344.