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Increased Florida exports goal of new \$1.1M training partnership

Workforce Florida and Enterprise Florida team with six statewide organizations to help small and mid-sized businesses master the exporting process

ORLANDO, FL (April 28, 2009) – Florida companies will become stronger competitors for foreign business prospects, thanks to an upcoming training venture funded by a Workforce Florida grant and six partner organizations. Called the Global Trade Training Pilot Program, it will be coordinated by Enterprise Florida.

A \$457,000 Quick Response Training (QRT) grant will be matched by nearly \$663,000 provided by the partners to offer export management and process training for about 630 employees of businesses targeting the international trade sector for expansion. QRT grants are performance-based, allotted to recipients after they have met contractual requirements. A state educational facility serves as the fiscal agent for the project receiving the grant, and the University of North Florida will assume this role for Global Trade Training.

The goal of Global Trade Training is to support the partners — Broward County, the Regional Minority Business Council (Miami Shores), The Grimes Companies (Jacksonville), ICS Logistics (Jacksonville), Martin County and Sarasota County — in their efforts to advise and prepare companies to grow their operations in foreign markets or improve global business success rates.

“It’s right in line with Workforce Florida’s mission,” said Chris Hart, president and CEO of the state’s workforce policy and oversight board. “This pilot program demonstrates our board’s commitment to helping existing Florida companies increase their chances for success in the global marketplace, while bringing more jobs and investment into the state.”

Enterprise Florida established the pilot to create Global Trade Training, which will offer practical steps businesses can take to enter into global markets that are good prospects. The training will cover international regulatory requirements and other relevant must-knows for selling products and services abroad. Three overarching focal areas of business needs were identified for the grants — export logistics, exporting for the marine industry and exporting to designated foreign markets.

In the grant proposal, which Enterprise Florida submitted on behalf of the partners, Broward, Martin and Sarasota counties described the need to help marine-industry businesses access international opportunities that could enhance their sales potential and create jobs in



Florida. Therefore, these counties will provide training encompassing export marketing, finance, compliance and logistics tailored to Florida’s marine sector.

Florida Regional Minority Business Council will assist new-to-export and new-to-market minority businesses, with customized training for small to medium-sized companies. And, Grimes and ICS Logistics will develop a curriculum addressing the needs of leadership and customer service for both import and export operations. This specialized training will include changing skill requirements resulting from escalating trade opportunities in Florida, and Jacksonville, particularly.

“All of the partner organizations are focused on Florida’s small businesses. Collectively, these enterprises account for nearly a third of all jobs relying on international business, and they employ more than 350,000 Floridians,” said John Adams Jr., Enterprise Florida’s president & CEO.

Grimes and ICS are scheduled to begin training in May; and June for Broward, Martin, Sarasota and the Minority Business Council. The QRT grant will cover expenses such as instructor fees, curriculum development and instructional materials. All training will be completed within 24 months.

“Trade and foreign investment support employment in all areas of Florida, which is the reason this program is so vital,” Adams added.

Per the U.S. Department of Commerce, global companies, on average, grow faster, pay 15 percent higher wages and are much more profitable than those that don’t export.

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About Enterprise Florida

Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI) is a partnership between Florida’s business and government leaders and is the principal economic development organization for the State of Florida. Headquartered in Orlando, EFI’s mission is to create and retain quality jobs and increase economic opportunities for Floridians by supporting strong and growing businesses and positioning Florida as a globally competitive business location. In pursuit of its mission, EFI works closely with a statewide network of economic development partners and is funded both by the State of Florida and by private-sector businesses.

About Workforce Florida

Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI) is the statewide workforce investment board led by leaders in business and government and charged with overseeing Florida’s workforce system, which includes 24 regional workforce boards and nearly 90 One-Stop Centers. Its mission is to develop strategies that help Floridians advance in the workforce while supporting economic development priorities and strengthening the state’s business climate. Learn more about Florida’s workforce resources and solutions at www.EmployFlorida.com.

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