



For Immediate Release

June 21, 2011

Contact:

Alyssa Brown, Workforce Florida Inc.
(850) 414-8301

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Ranks Florida's Workforce and Job Training No. 1 Among States

Tallahassee— Continuing a pattern of national recognition for its workforce training, Florida earned the top spot in the second annual *Enterprising States* report just released by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Chamber Foundation. After being ranked No. 2 last year for its workforce and training, the Sunshine State moved into the lead based on measures including job placement, the affordability and efficiency of its higher education system and the number of high school students enrolled in advanced placement courses. The nationwide report also touted Florida's Quick Response Training (QRT) Program.

"This latest top ranking is a testament to the value and success of our ongoing efforts to solidify Florida's vision for a winning, globally competitive workforce with education and training programs that sustain and strengthen the talent supply for our state's businesses," said Workforce Florida President and CEO Chris Hart IV.

As the statewide workforce investment board for Florida, Workforce Florida remains laser-focused on getting unemployed Floridians back to work and fostering economic growth through talent development. Helping to advance these efforts are the state's 24 Regional Workforce Boards that direct nearly 100 One-Stop Centers that provide employment and training assistance to Floridians and a range of services to businesses as well as the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation.

More than 80 percent of adults receiving training and intensive workforce services through the state workforce system found a job, with a nearly 90-percent retention rate, during the past year.

Meanwhile, administered by Workforce Florida, the state-funded QRT grants program advances job creation and retention by supporting customized skills upgrade training for new and expanding businesses. Businesses receiving these grants decide not only what training is needed, but who delivers it to their employees. Forty-two Florida companies have received

training grants this fiscal year to hire and train nearly 8,000 new or currently employed workers. For every dollar of public funding invested in QRT, these companies will invest nearly \$8 in training. Workers have experienced a 36-percent average wage increase following training using QRT. The program is recognized nationally for its lack-of-red-tape requirements and low overhead. Underscoring QRT's contributions to Florida's economic development efforts, the Legislature — with the support of Governor Rick Scott — allocated \$6 million (up from \$3.3 million this year) for grants to businesses in the new fiscal year that starts July 1.

The 2011 U.S. Chamber report, released on June 20, states that education and training of workers is at the center of a new paradigm for economic growth. The report estimates that by 2018, 63 percent of jobs will require some type of post-high school training credential. Florida is moving in the right direction, as the *Enterprising States* report ranked it first in high school advanced placement intensity and job placement efficiency, second in higher education efficiency and third in college affordability among the 50 states. The full report is available at <http://www.uschamber.com/reports/enterprising-states-2011>.

###

About Workforce Florida

Workforce Florida Inc. is the statewide workforce investment board led by business and government leaders and charged with overseeing Florida's workforce system, which includes the Agency for Workforce Innovation and 24 Regional Workforce Boards. Its mission is to develop strategies that help Floridians enter, remain and 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.

Workforce Florida is an equal opportunity employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. The voice telephone number in this document may be reached by persons using TTY/TDD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711.