

Broward Workforce Development Board

Florida 2020 Legislative Agenda

Updated: 4/16/2020

Items one and two, in that order, are the top BWDB priorities.

1. Florida Skills Training Allocation

Restrictions placed on federal dollars often hamper creativity and nimbleness when trying to respond to the training needs of businesses. Non-federal dollars would give us the flexibility and nimbleness to respond to employer needs in creative ways. For example, when using our workforce funding for Apprenticeships, we are limited to WIOA eligibility requirements which directs the funds to people with barriers to employment. This limits our capability to help many businesses. If you are a student living with your parents and going to school, you are usually under their income requirements.

Since businesses pay into the unemployment compensation program, it makes sense to use some of the money collected to meet employers' needs for talent. It would help put the unemployed back to work, move the underemployed up the wage ladder or help incumbent works add skills and avoid layoffs. The proposal seeks an assessment for contributory employers under the Reemployment Assistance (RA) system with a tax offset or to use some of the penalty and interest monies to help training unemployed underemployed and employed workers to increase their skills. No increase in taxes is recommended and would be suspended when a positive adjustment to the RA fund was needed. Target amount would be \$20 million allocated to the local workforce boards.

Update: None; no related bills were filed.

2. Support full use of the Sadowski Act funding for affordable housing benefiting employers, the workforce and seniors.

Lack of affordable housing has now been identified as a major barrier to attracting and retaining our workforce. The ALICE report shows that a significant number of households young and old are cost burdened in securing housing. We recommend full funding of the Sadowski Act for the purposes of affordable housing.

Update: The Florida Legislature has not swept affordable housing funding as the close of the session, but they may be vulnerable to address the economic impact and related unemployment due to Covid-19. As such, there is talk of another session, which means these funds may not yet be out of the woods.

3. Continue Apprenticeship Expansion

The 2019 Legislature took bold steps to increase workforce competitiveness with changes to FS 446 to expand Apprenticeship Training. We believe additional changes would continue that expansion and would be in line with Gubernatorial and legislative intent. These changes are:

- a. Have pre-apprentices covered by state worker compensation coverage similar to that which is provided to work experience participants. This would be for pre-apprentices 18 and under.
- b. Develop a method to allow for real time funding of apprenticeships and post-secondary programs similar to the FTE system used in secondary education.
- c. Allow Bright Futures scholarships to be used to fund apprenticeships and career and technical education.
- d. Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Programs are a recent expansion of the path to apprenticeships by the US Department of Labor. We recommend no further restrictions at the legislative or administrative level. Please allow all the flexibility allowed under the new rules from the US Department of Labor.

Update: HB 1203 - Pathways to Career Opportunities/SB 1568 - Education, which recommended revising provisions relating to apprenticeship & preapprenticeship programs, including providing individuals enrolled in certain apprenticeship programs to be employees of the state for purposes of receiving certain medical care under workers' compensation, was **indefinitely postponed and withdrawn from consideration and died in appropriations** on 3/14/2020.

4. The CareerSource network should be a single source for a wide range of talent within Florida.

Employ Florida should connect with graduates from our High Schools, State College and State University Systems. Current job banks systems they use or have developed should link with Employ Florida. This would improve the career links for all graduates of our educational system. It would also improve coordination and reduction of unnecessary duplication. Employers would have a single source for all their talent needs.

Update: None; no related bills were filed.