



SFWIB GLOBAL TALENT & COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

DATE/TIME: April 16, 2026, 8:30AM

LOCATION: The Landing at MIA, 5 Star Conference Center (South Beach Room)
 7415 Corporate Center Drive, Suite H
 Miami, Florida 33126

1. CALL TO ORDER: The Chairwoman Ferradaz called to order the regularly scheduled meeting of the SFWIB Global Talent and Competitiveness Council on April 16, 2026, at approximately 8:43 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL: 7 members; 4 required; 5 present: Quorum

SFWIB GTCC MEMBERS PRESENT	SFWIB GTCC MEMBERS ABSENT	SFWIB STAFF
Brecheisen, Bruce Brown, Clarence (Zoom) Ferradaz, Gilda, Chair Grice, Sonia Palacios, Carol	Whitaker, David SFWIB GTCC Members Excused del Valle, Juan-Carlos	Smith, Robert

Agenda items are displayed in the order they were discussed.

2. Public Comment

Public comments should be two minutes or less.

Chairwoman Ferradaz opened the floor for comments from the public. No requests to speak were received by the Executive Office, and no public comment was presented.

No further questions or comments were presented. Item closed.

3A. Global Talent and Competitiveness Council Meeting Minutes – February 19, 2026

Chairwoman Ferradaz presented the February 19, 2026, Global Talent and Competitiveness Council meeting minutes for consideration. During review, Mr. Brecheisen noted a correction on page 1, Item 2 (Roll Call): the minutes state five members present, while six members are listed in the Present column. No further observations were announced.

EXCEPTION: Although the minutes were submitted for approval, there is no documented record of an actual vote to approve the modified version. It is recommended to bring this matter before the council on June 18, 2026, for a vote.

No further questions or comments were presented. Item closed.

4. Informational – U.S. Department of Labor Launches “Make America AI-Ready” Free AI Literacy Course

Chairwoman Ferradez introduced the item; Mr. Smith presented information on the U.S. Department of Labor’s newly launched “Make America AI-Ready” course, a free, text-message-based AI literacy program designed to provide foundational artificial intelligence skills to American workers. The course requires no laptop or internet connection and can be completed on a cell phone over a standard cellular network. Individuals enroll by texting “READY” to 20202. This is a White House initiative developed in partnership with an education technology company and aligns with broader federal workforce and AI priorities. The course is structured around five core competency areas set out in the DOL’s AI Literacy Framework.

Mr. Smith noted the program’s relevance to the South Florida workforce region as a no-cost, low-barrier, stackable credential that can be promoted through the career centers, and indicated staff would continue to monitor similar nationally funded resources. Completion is not tracked at the national level for local reporting, though staff may follow up internally with participants.

There was an ongoing discussion regarding the strategic and directional implications of artificial intelligence (AI) on workforce development. Members noted that the pace of AI transformation is likely to outstrip traditional worker training and displacement. They questioned whether certain established programs will remain viable as industries adopt AI. Examples discussed included automated drive-through ordering, autonomous delivery vehicles, the recent authorization of autonomous vehicles on I-95 in Miami-Dade County, and the earlier shift from manual toll collection to electronic toll-by-plate systems.

Mr. Smith emphasized that AI is expected to reshape jobs rather than eliminate them entirely. This shift will create a demand for technicians and support roles to maintain, service, and manage automated systems. He also highlighted the importance of equipping participants with AI skills to fill the emerging positions. The continued discussion drew comparisons to previous technological shifts, such as the mechanization of agriculture and

the Industrial Revolution, but noted that the current transformation is happening over a much shorter time frame.

Mr. Smith also reported that SFWIB staff began a two-day AI and Power BI training with Miami-Dade College Kendall Campus the week of the meeting; focusing on using Microsoft Copilot to keep agency contracts aligned with legislative changes.

This was an informational item; no action was taken.

5. Approval – New Training Provider: South Florida Academy of Air Conditioning, LLC

Chairwoman Ferradez introduced the item; Mr. Smith introduced the South Florida Academy of Air Conditioning, LLC and its two programs:

- HVAC: Maintenance Technician – a 70-hour course completed over weekends, designed for working individuals, covering HVAC fundamentals, electrical troubleshooting, system maintenance, copper brazing, and servicing residential and light commercial air-conditioning systems.
- HVAC: Residential and Light Commercial Technician – a more advanced 185-hour course providing extensive hands-on training in system installation, refrigeration, wiring, troubleshooting, and repair.

Mr. Smith clarified that the recommendation is to approve the training provider and its programs only; no funding is requested.

Motion: by Ms. Grice to approve South Florida Academy of Air Conditioning, LLC as a new training provider and its programs. Mr. Brecheisen seconded the motion; **item is passed without dissent.**

No further questions or comments were presented. Item closed.

6. Approval – New Training Provider: OIC Workforce Academy

Chairwoman Ferradez introduced the item; Mr. Smith presented the OIC Workforce Academy, an IT-focused provider, and its three programs:

- CompTIA A+ – a 12-week, 300-hour course (including 50 lab hours) in computer technology and troubleshooting, preparing students for the CompTIA A+ certification.
- Construction Operations – a 12-week, 300-hour course (including 50 lab hours) in entry-level construction skills, including masonry, carpentry, plumbing, and basic electrical work.

- Warehouse Logistics – a 12-week, 300-hour course (including 50 lab hours) in supply chain principles, customer service, transportation, and warehouse operations, leading to CLA/CLT certifications.

Mr. Smith noted that all programs include employment placement assistance.

During discussion, Ms. Palacios asked how staff determines whether a proposed program aligns with regional industry demand, citing limited interest in CompTIA A+ in their own institutions experience.

Mr. Smith explained that the Board historically built a local demand-occupation list submitted to the state, but the state now centrally approves training providers; once a provider is approved at the state level, it may operate in the region. The Board retains the authority to set its own contracting requirements, and staff reviews each provider's performance history, completion and placement outcomes, and financial viability before bringing it to the Board for approval. Furthermore, Mr. Smith emphasized that participant choice drives enrollment in a competitive market, and the Board cannot restrict which approved schools may compete.

Motion: Ms. Grice moved to approve the OIC Workforce Academy as a new training provider and its programs. Ms. Palacios seconded the motion; **item is passed without dissent.**

No further questions or comments were presented. Item closed.

7. Approval – New Training Provider: Award Excellence Training Institute, Inc.

Chairwoman Ferradez introduced the item; Mr. Smith presented Award Excellence Training Institute, Inc. and its four programs: Carpentry, Electrical, HVACR/Mechanical Technician, and Project Management. Staff noted that the Carpentry, HVACR, and Project Management programs are 24-month, 648-hour programs, and the Electrical program is a four-year, 1,296-hour NCCER-aligned program. The institution is approved, pending issuance of the official CIE certificate.

Mr. Smith expressed a recurring concern regarding the state's approval of programs as registered apprenticeships. He pointed out that many of these programs adopt a classroom-first approach rather than a genuine earn-and-learn model, which ideally involves an employer and immediate employment opportunities. Since registered apprenticeship programs receive automatic approval at the state level, the Board cannot reject them.

To address this issue, CareerSource South Florida has implemented a safeguard: they do not pay for training under these programs. Instead, they reimburse employers only after a participant has been hired, which protects students from incurring tuition costs without guaranteeing employment. Staff members acknowledged that while a program may be approved, it is unlikely to be utilized under these conditions.

During discussion, a member asked how this provider differs from other HVAC programs. Staff explained that comparable programs offered by different providers function similarly (analogous to the same degree offered by different universities), with student choice determining enrollment, and clarified the apprenticeship application and state Department of Education review process, including alignment to industry certifications and CIE crosswalks.

Motion: by Mr. Brecheisen to approve Award Excellence Training Institute, Inc. as a new training provider and its programs. Ms. Grice seconded the motion; **item is passed without dissent.**

No further questions or comments were presented. Item closed.

8. Approval – New Training Provider: Soler & Soler CDL School Corp.

Chairwoman Ferradez introduced the item; Mr. Smith noted for the record that the spelling in the agenda subject line is incorrect and should read “Soler” (S-O-L-E-R) to match the body of the agenda item. Staff presented Soler & Soler CDL School Corp. and its programs:

- Class A: BTW – Public Road and Range (Automatic) – a 115-hour program combining hands-on driving and range training.
- Class A: BTW – Public Road and Range (Manual) – a 140-hour program providing more in-depth practice in control, proficiency, and safety without the automatic transmission restriction.

Mr. Smith noted the programs prepare students to take the Class A CDL examination.

Motion: by Ms. Grice to approve Soler & Soler CDL School Corp. as a new training provider and its programs. Mr. Brecheisen seconded the motion; **item is passed without dissent.**

No further questions or comments were presented. Item closed.

9. Approval – Summer Youth Employment Programs: Cities of Homestead, Opa Locka, and Miami Gardens

Chairwoman Ferradez introduced the item; Mr. Smith presented a recommendation to continue the Summer Youth Employment Programs in the same three cities, with the same

funding amounts as the previous year. The Cities of Homestead and Opa-locka have each approved \$50,000 in general revenue, allowing 38 participants in each city. Meanwhile, the City of Miami Gardens has approved \$150,000, which will serve 110 participants. Additionally, CareerSource South Florida will match the funding provided by the cities.

Mr. Smith noted that participants will earn \$14.00 per hour for a total of 140 hours, of which 20 hours are dedicated to work readiness training, with placements at local businesses within each city. Staff indicated this is the final year at the \$14.00 rate, as Florida's minimum wage increases in September, and a revised wage item will be brought forward next year.

Youth Co-Op, Inc. will operate the Homestead and Opa Locka programs, and Adults Mankind Organization, Inc. will operate the Miami Gardens program.

During discussion, Chairwoman Ferradaz noted a typographical error in the second paragraph of the agenda background: the combined city amount is shown with an extra zero and should read \$100,000 rather than \$1,000,000. The Board noted the correction.

Motion: by Mr. Clarence Brown to approve Summer Youth Employment Programs funding for the Cities of Homestead, Opa Locka, and Miami Gardens, with corrections, as set forth in the agenda item. Ms. Palacios seconded the motion; **item is passed without dissent.**

No further questions or comments were presented. Item closed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:34am.