

# SOLUTIONS

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**VOLUME I**

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

South Florida Workforce Investment Board (SFWIB) continues to make strides in building a stronger workforce in the Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. While a dramatic downturn in our economy has impacted our progress, we continue to empower our local communities through various partnerships and programs designed to invigorate the region's economy.

As in most parts of the country, Miami-Dade County experienced an increase of 1.1 percent in the unemployment rate from the previous year. We are addressing this issue by actively participating in regional and national efforts to bring businesses to South Florida.

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## INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS AIMED TO WORK

Most Miami-Dade and Monroe counties' residents are bearing the brunt of a challenging economy. However, The South Florida Workforce Investment Board (SFWIB) is spearheading programs and initiatives aimed to boost the local economy.

In fact, SFWIB is collaborating with Miami-Dade County's Office of Small Business Development (SBD) to target hard hit communities where historically unemployment barriers have been especially difficult to overcome. These areas have been identified as Designated Target Areas (DTA). Through the Community Workforce Program (CWP), employment and training opportunities are offered to these residents in an effort to establish a pool of skilled workers to meet industry demand.

In an agreement with Miami-Dade County, companies are required to have a portion of their workforce hired from DTA areas. SFWIB created DTA tool in which career center staff can extract jobseekers in these areas from a database and match the job seeker's  
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## TRAINING DOLLARS MAKING AN IMPACT

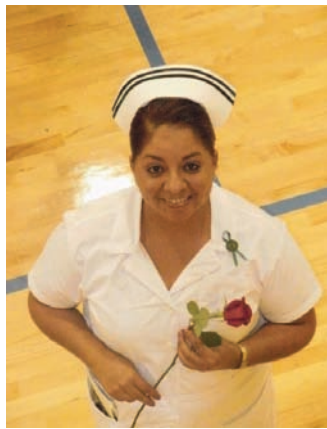
Like most families struggling to make ends meet, Rachel Ruiz, 37, desired a better life for her family. With limited skills, she experienced a difficult time finding a job.

Rachel sought help from the Homestead Career Center. Through the Workforce Investment ACT (WIA), a program offered at the center to provide intensive training and job placement assistance to clients, she enrolled at Miami Dade College's nursing program.

Rachel's hard work paid off. Today, she is a registered nurse; earning fifty-five thousand a year at Homestead Hospital. The net cost of training was over three thousand dollars with a return of over fifty-one thousand dollars. The training opportunity paved the way to a more stable future in an in-demand growth area. According to industry experts, the nursing shortage will intensify, as baby boomers age and the need for healthcare grows.

The economic benefits of Rachel obtaining a career will be apparent in the impact it will have on her family through the wide range of financial and personal rewards that will be accrued overtime.

Throughout this journey, Rachel earned a paid internship and attended school full-time. She quickly found a correlation between her coursework and the adjustments needed to reach her personal goal. Through her determination and refusal to let her family down, Rachel was able to accomplish what she set out to do. "I hope my story will inspire others," said Rachel, former participant of WIA.



*Rachel Ruiz, RN*

## INVESTING IN TOMORROW'S FUTURE

SFWIB awarded \$300,000 to the Take Stock in Children Scholarship Program (TSIC) and 5,000 Role Models of Excellence Program. These school-based mentoring initiatives support at-risk youth in grades fifth through eleventh. The 5,000 Role Models program is geared specifically towards males.

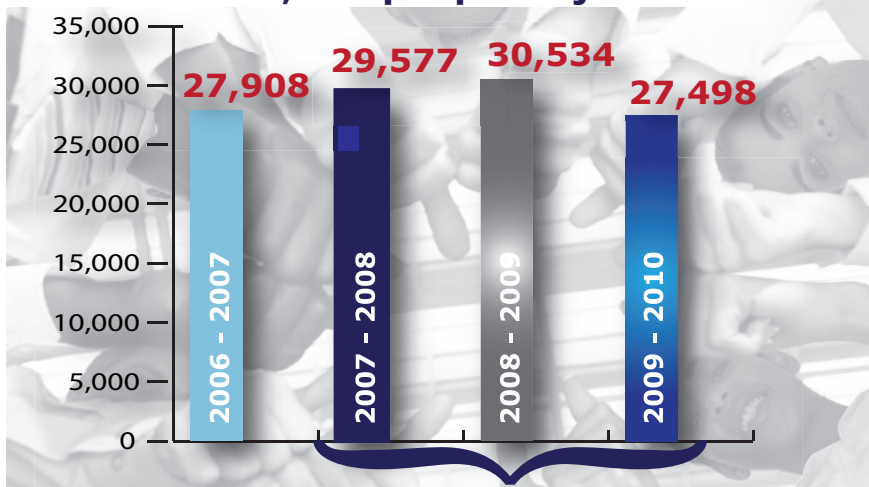
Upon graduation from the high school and successfully fulfilling obligations of the program, students are awarded a fully paid college tuition scholarship. They have the option to pursue a technical or vocational degree at institutions that participate in Florida Pre-paid Scholarships.

Lauded for their tough stance on keeping at-risk youth focused on academic success, TSIC and 5,000 Role Models prepare students to become productive citizens by providing early intervention, mentoring, case management and long term support. Participants, whose families meet eligibility for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), are mentored by adult volunteers and parents who actively engage in the child's academic and personal development. In addition, staff regularly monitor students' academic performance, participation in program activities, and their ability to remain drug and crime free.

"We remain committed to supporting programs that develop critical intervention plans that will ultimately make a positive and lasting change to the lives of our future workforce," said Bernardo Adrover, chairman for the South Florida Workforce Investment Board. These proven programs offer children from low-income families solutions for achieving academic success while motivating parents to strive for higher economic standing.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**In the past four years, SFWIB placed over 115,000 people in jobs.**



**ECONOMIC DOWNTURN**



## A GATEWAY TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Access to computers and the Internet and the ability to effectively use this technology are becoming increasingly important in America's economic life. While inequality to access technology remains a relevant issue in our communities, South Florida Workforce is working towards bridging the gap in age groups, gender, socio-economic variances and cultures.



*In this photo, Chairman Bernardo J. Adrover of SFWIB, Board members Andre "Andy" M. Perez and Obdulio Piedra, Executive Director Rick Beasley and participants of "Digital Divide" from Homestead Career Center.*

In 2009, SFWIB launched its Digital Divide Project partnering with Per Scholas Inc., a non-profit organization, to provide low-income families with refurbished personal computers, free technology training and one-year of paid Internet access. SFWIB awarded 268 computers to deserving families with a goal of serving 405 families. These families are selected from work-ready participants who are receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). TANF is a federal aid program that Congress passed in 1996 that provides block grants to states to move low-income single parents from welfare-to-work. "By providing families with computers and Internet access, we empower them to greater opportunities", said Bernardo Adrover, chairman of South Florida Workforce Investment Board.

Most recently, South Florida Workforce Investment Board (SFWIB) was awarded a \$250,000 grant to expand its efforts in building more technology training opportunities and addressing the digital access needs of the region. SFWIB is one of 23 participating regions throughout the state to receive its share of a \$4.3 million federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding (ARRA) from Workforce Florida, Inc.

For more information on Digital Divide Project, contact SFWIB at 305.594.7615 or TTY 305.470.5529.

## LEARN MORE, EARN MORE

If you're looking for a job, one of the most important job skills to have is computer skills. Having these important skills will certainly help you land a better career.

South Florida Workforce recognizes that there is a significant wage differential in computer users and non-users. It's been empirically proven that computer users earn substantially higher earnings and are likely to gain a higher paying career than non-users because of their computer skills. In fact, some reports suggest that computer users earn 17% more than non-users.

In a major public-private partnership with Microsoft® Elevate America, South Florida Workforce Investment Board is offering 7,000 free vouchers for online computer training programs to Miami-Dade and Monroe counties' residents to expand access to basic technology literacy and skills training.

These vouchers are redeemable for one E-Learning course or certification exam. The E-Learning courses include applications from Microsoft Office Suite: Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel and Microsoft PowerPoint. These valuable learning tools can be self-paced, at various learning levels. In addition, web development, database management and more courses are also available for IT professionals. Moreover, individuals interested in being certified for Microsoft Office 2007 and Vista can pursue the certification exams at a Certiport Testing Centers. Some sites may require a nominal fee for proctoring the exam.

Elevate America's Florida vouchers will be available through August 21, 2010, or while supplies last. The vouchers and certification exam vouchers must be activated and used by this date. There are no income requirements to participate in Elevate America.

For more information on Microsoft® Elevate America, please contact South Florida Workforce at 305-594-7615, TTY 305.470.5529 or visit [www.southflorida-workforce.com](http://www.southflorida-workforce.com).

# DON'T GET SCAMMED!

South Florida Workforce Investment Board (SFWIB) warns Miami-Dade and Monroe counties' residents to be wary of companies offering beach clean-up jobs for a fee. Some private companies are providing job opportunities in the recovery effort. However, job seekers should be aware that others may be exploiting the situation for personal gain.

Recent reports indicate some local residents have paid fees to submit applications or undergo training for oil spill-related jobs, only to later discover the advertised jobs were not available or the training not as described. SFWIB is working closely with British Petroleum Corporation (BP) contractors and subcontractors to ensure that unemployed local residents are considered first for local response and recovery jobs.

"We are asking residents to be cautious. Certified BP contractors do not charge for job training and in many cases pay the trainees to participate in these trainings," said Rick Beasley, executive director of South Florida Workforce.

SFWIB is encouraging residents to be careful of providing pertinent information such as social security numbers to unknown entities. Be cautious about traveling to job sites in different counties unless a position has been offered and accepted. Finally, consumers who believe they may have been victimized by potentially deceptive or unfair practices related to oil spill jobs should contact:

- The Attorney General's Fraud Hotline at 1-866-966-7226, or
- The Florida Department of Agriculture's Consumer Hotline at 1-800-435-7352, or
- The Chief Financial Officer's Consumer Helpline at 1-877-693-5236.

Consumers with questions about available oil spill response and recovery jobs can contact 1-877-362-5034 or go to [www.floridagulfrecoveryjobs.com](http://www.floridagulfrecoveryjobs.com)



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## INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS AIMED TO WORK

profile with an available job. When a potential match is found, referrals are made to prospective employers. Currently, there is a growing list of companies and participants in this program.

As part of a strategic plan, SFWIB is working closely with companies to create more employment opportunities. Through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program (WOTC), companies are reaping incentives for hiring individuals from certain target groups including youth, veterans and disabled veterans, ex-felons and more. WOTC was developed from SFWIB's partnership with the Beacon Council and Agency for Workforce Innovation. "When a company hires individuals from these target groups, employers can reduce their taxes from \$2400 up to \$9000 through the course of two years" said, Rick Beasley, executive director of South Florida Workforce Investment Board.

SFWIB will continue to seek ways to assist the unemployed back to work, and develop more opportunities for job creation.

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Our programs have allowed our agency to be in the forefront of our nation's top employment industries, and enable us to contribute most significantly to South Florida's overall economic health and sustainability. Our partnering with Microsoft® and Monster.com provides numerous opportunities for jobseekers eager to stand out in today's competitive job market.

We want to assure you that we are committed to delivering high performance employment and training services to our region's citizens while fostering economic prosperity. Meanwhile, we will remain focused on providing valuable resources to South Florida's families and supporting employers as our economy recovers.

We invite you to visit our career centers throughout the region. Through registering on Employ Florida Marketplace web portal, job seekers and employers can receive a full range of services to assist in their workforce development needs. Following us on Facebook and Twitter will keep you updated on timely and concise information on employment opportunities. More importantly, we welcome your ideas and feedback. Together, we can build a stronger and more valuable workforce.

Rick Beasley  
Executive Director

## SOUTH FLORIDA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

The South Florida Workforce delivery system provides high quality, customized employment and training solutions to workers and employers in support of economic development in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.

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## SOLUTIONS

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