

Editorial: Florida's Banner Centers can be significant aid in matching employee training with industry needs

Eleven programs in Florida provide specialized short-term training specifically tailored for the needs of targeted industries

By Editorial Board

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One of the most valuable tools for economic development and jobs on the Treasure Coast may also be one of the least known.

"Banner centers," created by Workforce Florida, provide hands-on training for targeted industries using curriculum developed by the industries in conjunction with academic partnerships across the state.

There are 11 such centers in the state. The goal of each is to:

Become the statewide nexus for industry knowledge related to workforce needs of a targeted industry.

Support the pipeline development needs of key Florida industries from entry level to advanced workers.

Deliver workforce development products, services, training and access to certifications valued by industry.

Promote and support economic development in a targeted industry throughout the state.

The training, which can help people gain practical knowledge for a specific industry and, thereby, become more employable, is generally short, usually a day or two, coupled with several hours of online instruction.

While the centers are located at specific educational institutions, the classes may be offered anywhere in the state where that training is needed.

The 11 centers offer training in the following: advanced manufacturing, aviation and aerospace, agriscience, clean energy, construction, creative industries, energy, financial and professional services, global logistics, homeland security and defense,

and life sciences.

Two of the banner centers are at Indian River State College — the Employ Florida Banner Center for Energy and the Employ Florida Banner Center for Homeland Security and Defense.

Last year, Palm Beach State College received the contract for the Employ Florida Banner Center for Life Sciences, providing statewide training in the areas of biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and medical devices.

That could prove particularly valuable on the Treasure Coast by providing training for biotech employers such as Torrey Pines and VGTI Florida, both in Port St. Lucie.

Indian River State College is an academic partner with the Banner Center for Life Sciences and provides some of its specialized training.

While unemployment remains high across the Treasure Coast, some manufacturing leaders in the region have raised concerns about not being able to find employees with the training the industries need. Working with banner centers, industries in the area can develop the instructional programs they need for future employees or to train existing employees.

Job seekers and those wanting to improve their skills should learn about banner centers and what they have to offer. Information on the centers is available at workforceflorida.com.

Matching employee skills with employer needs is critical for improving the jobs situation on the Treasure Coast. Banner centers offer tremendous potential to help that occur.



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