



Sept – Oct 2011

In This Issue

- **Workforce Alliance awards \$100K grant to Wellington Regional Medical Center**.....p 2
- **Area businesses receive \$300K in state training grants**.....p 3
- **InfoTech Initiative could bring \$5 million to IT industry**.....p 4
- **LEAD report**.....p 5

Labor Economics and Development Report

Workforce Alliance’s exclusive *Labor Economics and Development (LEAD) Report* expresses optimism for Palm Beach County’s current economic outlook.

The latest report points out that “nine (9) out of eleven (11) private sector industries that are key components of the Palm Beach County economy are now showing employment growth; even though most of these experienced their recession lows after the November 2010 low in total non-farm employment. With these lagging industry categories now finally adding jobs, it provides evidence that a broad-based recovery is underway and suggests that growth will continue.”

The complete report (pp. 5-8) includes:

- **Job Growth by Industry Sector**
- **Tourism leading the way**
- **Unemployment rates: Jan 2009 to present.**

[Click here](#) for a copy of the latest *Labor Economics and Development Report*

Palm Beach County Unemployment Rate Shows Slight Decline

The unemployment rate in Palm Beach County in August 2011 was 11.0 percent, a decline of 0.2 percentage points from the 11.2 percent rate of the previous month, and down 1.3 percentage points from 12.3 percent rate of August 2010.

Steve Craig, interim chief executive officer of Workforce Alliance, said, “It’s encouraging to note that Palm Beach County experienced its largest over-the-year employment increase of 2011, adding 8,100 jobs over the last 12 months, and that job openings have increased 12.6 percent compared to this same time last year.”

The August 2011 unemployment rate was 0.1 percentage points higher than the state’s rate of 10.9 percent, and 1.9 percentage points higher than the national rate of 9.1 percent, not seasonally adjusted.

Palm Beach County experienced employment growth in six industry categories over the last 12 months, including leisure and hospitality (+5,700 jobs), education and health services (+4,100 jobs), professional and business services (+1,700 jobs), other services (+400 jobs), transportation/warehousing (+300 jobs), and financial activities (+100 jobs).

Palm Beach County and State of Florida Workforce Data				
August 2011 (not seasonally adjusted)				
	Population	Labor Force	Unemployed	Unemployment rate
Palm Beach County	1,286,461	621,786	68,573	11.0 %
State of Florida	18,772,352	9,253,000	1,010,000	10.9 %

Source: Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, Labor Market Statistics Center

For a complete overview of the latest Palm Beach County employment data, job losses and gains by industry groups, and comparisons with the state and national unemployment data, please [click here](#).

Successful Recruiting Event Held at Career Center



More than 350 qualified candidates came to the West Palm Beach Career Center on Sept 14-15 for job interviews with Burlington Coat Factory for 100 positions at a new store. Store officials were very pleased with the Workforce Alliance facility and services.

Medical Center Receives \$100,000 Grant

Wellington Regional Medical Center recently converted its paper-based medical records system into an electronic system to improve the hospital's overall efficiency and allow it to maintain its competitiveness in the healthcare/hospital services industry.

Since the system would be used by the entire hospital staff, a large number of employees were in need of training.

The hospital was faced with an expense of over \$200,000 to train a sufficient number of employees in the advanced skills required to use the electronic records system.

Workforce Alliance's **Employed Worker Training (EWT)** program is designed to help employers in precisely this kind of dilemma.

A Workforce Alliance Business Services representative guided the company through the process of applying for **EWT** funding that would reimburse the company for a portion of the training costs.

The hospital was approved for a grant of \$100,157 for a program that would provide training for 339 hospital employees and give them the necessary skills to use the new program.



Workforce Alliance Vice President, Business Services, **Gerry Genovese** (left, holding plaque), presents plaque to **Wellington Regional Medical Center CEO Jerel Humphrey** (right, holding plaque) accompanied by staff from both organizations (left to right): WA Program Funding Manager **Katherine Bonner**; WRMC Chief Medical Officer **Dr. Jeffrey Bishop**; WRMC human resources dept. staff member **Nancy Lydon**; WRMC Director of Human Resources **Mary Jo Garski**; and WA Account Manager **Jan Cook**.

Kristin Kampfer Recognized as Palm Beach County "Success Story"

Workforce Alliance Career Placement Specialist **Kristin Kampfer** received recognition as a "Success Story" by the **Palm Beach County Business Leadership Network (BLN)** during the 2011 "Making Connections" Conference held at **Northwood University**. Holly Stewart, chair of the Palm Beach County BLN, introduced Kristin as a true success story for excelling in her accomplishments after assuming a professional position with Workforce Alliance earlier this year.

Kristin, with a simultaneous verbal and sign language presentation, explained her role at Workforce Alliance in providing assistance to persons with disabilities who wish to enter the workforce or start on a career.

The **Palm Beach County BLN** promotes the employment of people with disabilities through diversity policies and hiring practices that target candidates with disabilities. It offers employers resources for recruiting candidates with disabilities, information on disability employment issues, recognition for best employment practices, and exposure to untapped markets for goods and services.

The event was sponsored by the **Able Trust, United Way, the Coalition for Independent Living Options (CILO)** and several other community organizations. It gave employers information on disability employment issues and provided recognition for success stories and best disability employment practices.



Kristin Kampfer

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month

The official theme for the 2011 National Disability Employment Awareness Month, "**Profit by Investing in Workers with Disabilities**," honors the contributions of workers with disabilities in helping employers compete in today's global economy.

"Return on investment means hiring the right talent," said U.S. Department of Labor Assistant Secretary for Disability Employment Policy **Kathy Martinez**. "Workers with disabilities represent all skill sets and are ready to get the job done. This year's theme focuses on improving employment opportunities that lead to good jobs and a secure economic future for people with disabilities and the nation as a whole." [Learn more...](#)

Companies Benefit from State Training Grants

Sixteen Palm Beach County businesses received State of Florida Incumbent Worker Training funds totaling **\$319,131** to increase the skills of their current employees during the recently completed program year, July 2010 through June 30, 2011.

Incumbent Worker Training grants are issued by the statewide agency, Workforce Florida, Inc., to reimburse businesses for a portion of the cost of training their employees. When the employer contributions are added to the grant total, the economic impact of the entire program for Palm Beach County was **\$2,144,092**.

The grants ranged in size from \$3,375 to \$50,000. The companies with the largest grants included Office Depot, TMS Health, E-Z Weld, Jenoptic Optical Systems and Minuteman Press.

Workforce Florida is now accepting applications for the new program year and can assist Palm Beach County employers in determining eligibility and making application. The contact at Workforce Alliance is Katherine Bonner, (561) 340-1060 ext. 2344, or e-mail: kbonner@pbcalliance.com.

Complete information about Incumbent Worker Training grants and other services available to businesses is available at www.pbcalliance.com.



EWT Grant Supports Company's Growth Plans

Audio Video Security Systems, Inc. (AVS), a small but expanding full-service security systems provider, applied for an **Employed Worker Training (EWT)** grant from Workforce Alliance to realize a goal of training its existing workforce to expand its capabilities in the alarm systems business.

The company needed to provide the training for three of its employees and faced a training cost of over \$6,500. With the assistance of Workforce Alliance, AVS secured an Employed Worker Training grant of \$3,118 to cover nearly half of the total cost.

At the conclusion of the training, the employees became skilled and certified in additional specialties, and the company had a workforce that increased its competitive ability in an industry having ever-changing technological requirements.

"In summary," said AVS President **Rosemarie A. Ingui**, "the EWT grant will help the individuals to grow professionally and provide them with additional marketable skills."



Workforce Alliance Account Manager Nancy Medina (right) presents an EWT certificate to AVS General Manager Angela Barnard and the employees who completed the training (from left): Steve DeShocka, Larry Sanchez and Lee Barnard.

Governor Declares September as Workforce Development Month

Governor Rick Scott issued an official proclamation declaring September as **Workforce Development Month** to honor Florida's 24 workforce development organizations and acknowledge the valuable services provided to employers and job seekers statewide by the regional organizations. In Palm Beach County, **Workforce Alliance** placed 12,771 candidates in jobs in its most recent program year (July 2010 to June 2011) – a 19 percent increase compared to the previous year. [Click here to view the proclamation.](#)

Cytonics Corp. Benefits from Workforce Alliance EWT Grant

Cytonics Corporation is a research and development company based in Jupiter, Florida. In 2010, the company introduced a diagnostic testing service based on a discovery made at the company. However, the company faced a stringent FDA requirement that would not allow any of its current personnel to perform tasks related to providing the new testing service. The FDA requirement stated that the employees could not perform the service unless they had first completed training in network security and other specific document control software.

The company needed to provide the training for five of its employees and faced a cost of over \$1,100 per person. With Workforce Alliance assistance, the company was able to secure an Employed Worker Training (EWT) grant to cover half of the total cost of the specialized training.

The employees completed the training and the company became fully capable of meeting all FDA requirements. It then introduced its diagnostic testing service using its existing employees, each of whom had received the required training and certification.



Workforce Alliance Account Manager **Christie Finnerty** presents the Employed Worker Training (EWT) reimbursement check and certificate to Cytonics Corporation President **Ray Johnson**.

Partnership Opportunity Could Bring \$5 million to County's IT Industry

The **InfoTech Workforce Development Initiative (IWDI)** is a strategic partnership launched by **Workforce Alliance** that is now seeking additional partners on a project that could make as much as \$5 million available for Palm Beach County businesses to train workers for high-level information technology occupations.

A proposal is being developed for a **Technical Skills Training Grant** from the U.S. Department of Labor, and Workforce Alliance is now seeking partners for this exciting potential project.

The grant award could provide up to \$5 million in IT training funds to our region over four years and would cover all costs associated with upgrading the IT skills of current employees.

Despite high unemployment rates, many IT employers are often forced to look outside the region for workers with the right mix of skills, experience, and credentials.

The **InfoTech Workforce Development Initiative** was launched by Workforce Alliance to support and strengthen the workforce needs of Palm Beach County's growing IT sector.

This is a strategic partnership comprised of representatives from industry, education, and economic development – each of whom are committed to assuring that local companies have access to a cadre of highly-skilled workers. The proposal for the **Technical Skills Training Grant** from the U.S. Department of Labor is intended to contribute to the accomplishment of that goal.

Businesses can participate by providing an estimate of their training needs and signing a letter indicating participation for inclusion in the grant proposal. If the **IWDI** wins the grant, Workforce Alliance will develop training contracts with each participating business.

For more information about the **IWDI** and the **Technical Skills Training Grant** opportunity, contact:

Michelle Dryer, 561.340.1060 x2487,
mdryer@pbcalliance.com or
Douglas Saenz, 561.340.1060 x2384
dsaenz@pbcalliance.com



Labor Economics and Development (LEAD) Report

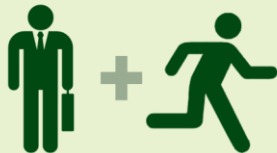
AUGUST 2011 | ISSUE 2

LOCAL SNAPSHOT

PBC INDUSTRY RECOVERY

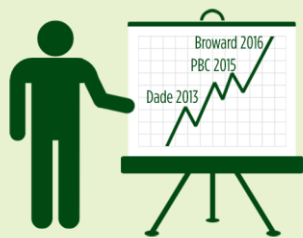


PBC UNEMPLOYMENT



9,000 Now Working 3,000 Left Job Market
= -12,000 in Unemployed Since 11/10

REGIONAL TIMELINE



Return to Peak Employment
(at current growth rate)

Broad-based Jobs Recovery Provides Grounds for Optimism

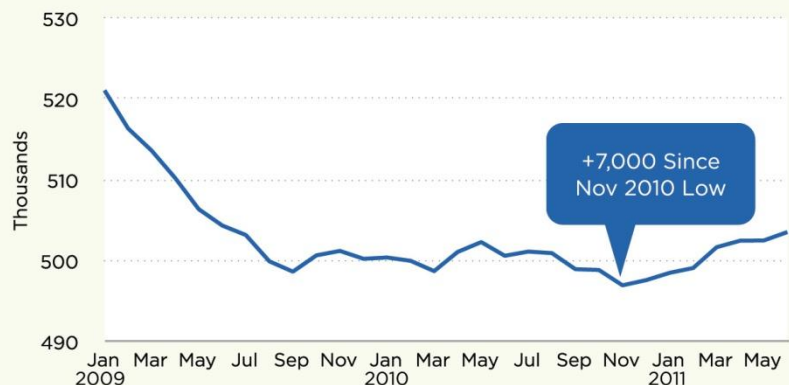
According to the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), which is the official U.S. business cycle dating organization, the most severe recession since the Great Depression ended in June 2009. The national economic recovery has now entered its third year, but job creation has yet to pick up steam.

The national return to job growth (March 2010) was delayed almost nine (9) months after the economy had begun to expand. However, Miami-Dade County was already leading the way in November 2009 with its strong international sector, large port, airport and bilingual workforce which has benefited from strong growth in Brazil and Colombia. Palm Beach and Broward counties have much smaller economies by comparison, and are more dependent on construction and real estate development. They did not reach their recession low until a year later towards the end of 2010.

Palm Beach County (PBC) has added around 7,000 non-farm jobs since that recession low. This represents a recovery of about ten (10) percent of the jobs lost during the recession. If job growth continues at this rate, the county will return to its pre-recession peak in 2015, a year or two ahead of Broward County and a couple of years behind Miami-Dade County.

But there is reason to be optimistic. Despite continuing macro economic insecurity, nine (9) out of eleven (11) private sector industries that are key components of the Palm Beach County economy are now showing employment growth; even though most of these experienced their recession lows after the November 2010 low in total non-farm employment. With these lagging industry categories now finally adding jobs, it provides evidence that a broad-based recovery is underway and suggests that growth will continue.

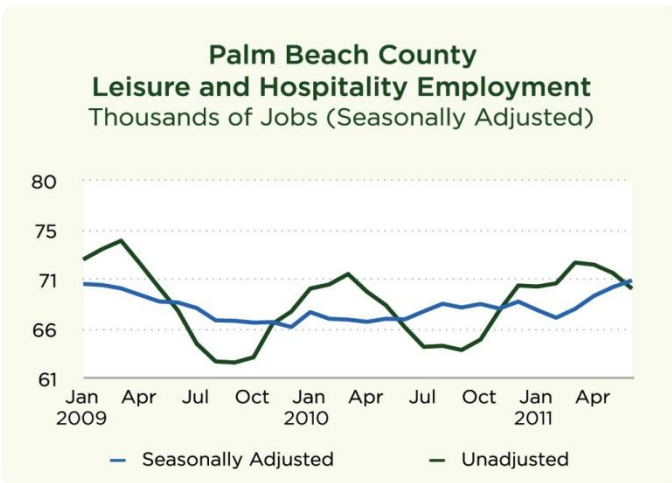
Palm Beach County Employment
Non-Farm Jobs (Seasonally Adjusted)



Job Growth by Industry Sector

The jobs recovery in the county has been two-pronged. Three early-mover industries began their recoveries at the end of 2009 and four recent movers began to add jobs in the first half of 2011.

Two of Palm Beach County's historic industry strengths, "Leisure and Hospitality" and "Other Services" (which includes personal services) were early movers, as both are sensitive to tourist spending. Financial activities also grew early, reflecting the efforts of area banks to deal with the high level of mortgage defaults and home foreclosures in the county.



Leisure and hospitality employment increased to 70,400 in June 2011, which supports the claim that tourism is currently leading Palm Beach County out of the worst recession in 70 years. The green line in the chart to the left shows the typical seasonal pattern for tourism, with the peak employment month in March and the lowest employment month in September. The blue line is the seasonally-adjusted employment.

Other industries are beginning to grow as well. "Professional, technical and management services" is a recent mover and has added more than 2,000 jobs since March. Some of this growth may be reflecting the beginning of a recovery in the real estate development industry, especially since even construction employment has begun adding jobs (500 new jobs added since March).

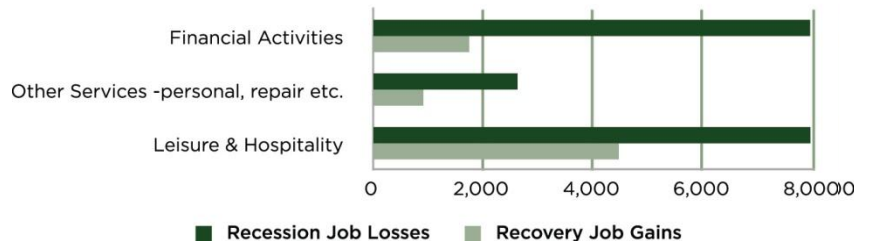
The industry category "Administrative and Business Support" added more than 1,400 jobs in June alone, and even "Manufacturing" has added 600 jobs since January.

While "Trade, Transportation and Utilities" did not hit bottom until relatively late in January 2011, even this industry sector has added 100 jobs since then.

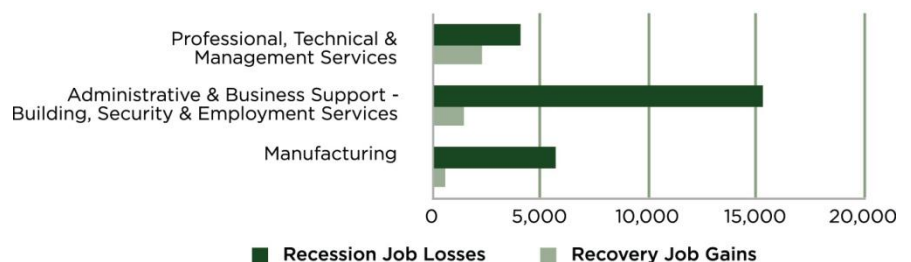
Two industries are experiencing secular (long term) trends independent of the recession. The (private) "Education and Health" industry is on an upward trend due to an increasing demand for health care, largely driven by the aging of the population.

The "Information" industry (media and communications) is still losing jobs, but this reflects a downward trend not due to the recession but related to the decline in newspaper readership and other technological developments.

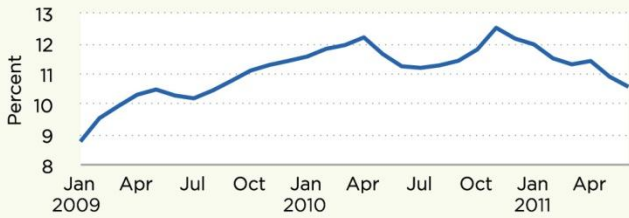
Early Movers in the Jobs Recovery Changes in the Number of Jobs



Recent Movers in the Jobs Recovery Changes in the Number of Jobs



Palm Beach County Unemployment Rate
Unemployed Persons as a Percent of the Labor Force
(Seasonally Adjusted)



The county unemployment rate peaked at 12.5 percent in November 2010, the month in which non-farm employment reached its recession low. An initial improvement due to the temporary hiring of census workers in the spring of 2010 proved to be short lived, but the unemployment rate has still generally trended down since its peak.

The almost two (2) full percentage point decline in the county unemployment rate since the end of 2010 was assisted by a decline in the labor force. Since December, Palm Beach County's labor force has fallen by 3,500. This is in strong contrast to the labor force growth of 10,000 workers between September 2009 and December 2010.

The number of people who are unemployed in the county has fallen by more than 12,000 since the peak. Of these, 9,000 individuals have obtained employment and 3,000 have disappeared from the labor force, either by relocating elsewhere in the country or because they were discouraged in their job search.

Palm Beach County Labor Force
Number of People (Seasonally Adjusted)

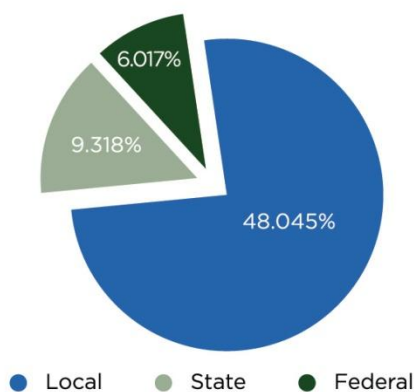


The unemployment rate continued to decline in June, even though it was widely reported that it rose from 10.3 percent to 11 percent. When the data is adjusted for Palm Beach County's highly seasonal economy, the rate actually fell from 10.9 percent to 10.6 percent.

Jobs are lost at a slower rate than sales decline during a recession, because employers hold on to strategic employees in order to avoid rehiring and retraining costs once the economy recovers. This "labor hoarding" is why job creation does not always occur immediately after a general economic recovery. However, because PBC's recent industry movers are now on a sustainable upward trend, this provides some hope for continued economic recovery in Palm Beach County.

LAGGING DECLINES: Job losses in the government sector were reduced by the federal stimulus program which was followed by a temporary respite in the spring of 2010 due to the Federal Census. But between the peak in September 2008 and the end of census hiring in June 2010, there was a loss of 1,900 jobs. Since then, government employment in the county has declined by 2,400 jobs; most from local government which has lost 4,500 jobs since the peak.

Local Government has Largest Share of PBC Government Employment
June 2011 - Percent of Government Jobs



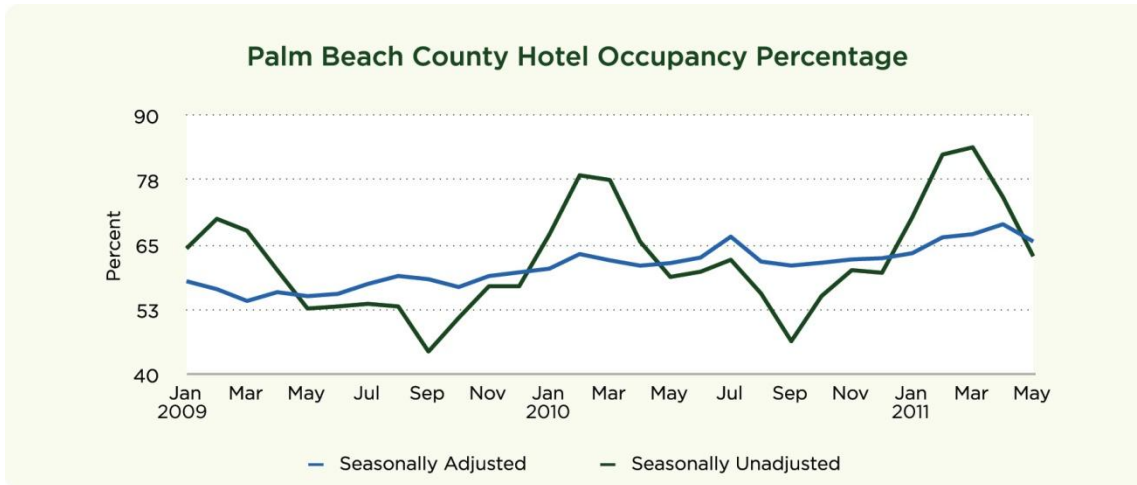
Local Government Employment Continues to Decline PBC
(Seasonally Adjusted)



Tourism leading the way out of the recession

The local economy and employment are very dependent on consumer spending from local full-time residents, as well as the spending of those who vacation or live here seasonally. This makes industries that are sensitive to national and local consumers important economic drivers for Palm Beach County. Two of these, namely “Leisure and Hospitality” and “Other Services”, were early movers in the economic recovery.

Employment in Leisure and Hospitality recovered in 2010, adding 1100 jobs during the year and an additional 2000 jobs in 2011. As national and local consumer confidence rises, consumer spending will continue to drive the local leisure and hospitality industry even higher.



The chart above shows the trend in hotel occupancy for Palm Beach County. The green line reflects the actual occupancy by month, and the seasonal occupancy pattern that peaks in March and reaches its trough in September. The blue line is seasonally adjusted to take out the monthly seasonal pattern so that we can judge hotel occupancy over time. The seasonally-adjusted hotel occupancy fell during the recession, reaching its low point of 54 percent in March 2009. Occupancy levels have been improving since March, increasing to 66 percent by May 2011.

The Palm Beach County hotel industry has recovered most of the ground that was lost during the recession. As occupancy trended downward during the recession, hoteliers discounted room prices and average daily room rates trended downward. After the bottom in occupancy, room rates trended upward in 2010 and rose sharply in the spring of 2011 (on a seasonally adjusted basis). Revenue per available room, which combines the occupancy and room rates, fell during the recession, reaching a low of \$69.20 in October 2009. Since that time, it has risen to \$90.70, a sizable increase but still below the pre-recession peak of \$103.30. Hotel construction has also recently resumed in the county for the first time since 2009.

The PBC LEAD Report is also available at www.pbcalliance.com

In the Next Issue:

Palm Beach County's Economic Index gauges the level of “economic activity” in the county and employment projections are made.



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EMPLOYERS:

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Employees**

Use our Job Order Hotline:

Tel: 1-800-556-JOBS (5627)

Fax: 561-340-1051

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- [Occupations with the most openings](#)
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- [Hiring incentives & tax credits](#)
- [Executive Transition Unit](#)
- [Recruitment services](#)
- [Hiring veterans](#)
- [Incentives for hiring employees with disabilities](#)

In addition, a variety of services are provided to assist organizations that are anticipating or going through layoffs. For complete details, contact a Workforce Alliance Business Services Account Manager at **1-800-556-JOBS (5627)**.

CAREER CENTER LOCATIONS

Central Career Center & Executive Transition Unit

1951 North Military Trail, Ste. D
West Palm Beach, FL 33409
Telephone (561) 340-1060



[Click here](#)

South Career Center & Executive Transition Unit

951 Yamato Road, Suite 175
Boca Raton, FL 33487
Phone: (561) 853-0181 ext. 2017
Fax: (561) 981-6799



[Click here](#)

West Career Center
1085 South Main Street
Belle Glade, FL 33430
Telephone (561) 829-2040



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