

The Florida Eight

regional markets, global customers, great service, economic vitality for employers.

April 2011

More and more, Florida must compete and win on a regional basis. The state is still recovering from a significant recession which requires collaborative partners to work better together toward common objectives. Governor Scott's 7 – 7 – 7 Plan is focused on regions and regional resources to attract, retain and grow businesses.

Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI) announces **The Florida Eight** initiative, with a call to Florida's eight economic development regions for the formation of Regional Business Teams (RBTs) for The Florida Eight initiative, enabling the creation, launch and management of region-based, state-connected strategy and action to drive job and business retention. The Florida Eight is a strategic project funded through Workforce Florida to build regional capacity; job and business retention; international diversification; and empower regional collaboration.

In the first quarter of 2011, Workforce Florida launched a new strategic plan for Florida's workforce system, called *Creating the Strategy for Today's Needs and Tomorrow's Talent*. It can be found at <http://www.workforceflorida.com/PrioritiesInitiatives/StateStrategicPlan.php>. One of the plan's expected achievements deals with supporting leaps in flexibility in resources to support target industry clusters, growing enterprises, and threatened employers. The Florida Eight initiative is being launched with project support from Fairfield Index, Inc. to help structure a flexible process enabling all eight economic development regions to form or improve business retention teams, provide team resources and project communications otherwise not available, develop or further enhance existing business retention strategic plans, help convene key team members, and help teams identify mutual and exclusive roles and responsibilities.

Though RBT strategic plans must include some consideration of opportunities associated with diversification in international markets, and lead to improvement of business retention and recruitment, and employment prospects for the workforce; RBTs will have **broad latitude** in seeking out and securing the right approaches, tools, and resources to get the job accomplished. Flexibilities may include: policy, collaboration, new approaches to incumbent industry data and trends, relationship management with incumbent industries, better utilization of existing or nascent tools, improved data collection, and/or sharing common resources cross-regions.

Workforce Florida intends to stage launches of up to eight Regional Business Teams (RBTs) focused on job and business retention. The RBT regions are aligned around the geographically-defined economic development regions adopted by Enterprise Florida, Inc. and the Florida Economic Development Council. The teams will be operational for up to a two-year basis, and each RBT will have access to tools and resources designed to make the collaborative business retention work of the region easier and more productive, including an RBT portal/team room, RBT notes, Enterprise Goals system, and more.

On Monday, April 18th, 2011 from 1:30pm - 2:30pm EST a state-wide [Analysts' Briefing](#) webinar will held to provide background on the initiative to potential RBT applicants and partners, outline an overview of the filing process, explain protocols for regional business team formation, and critical dates for the initiative. The process is designed with flexibility for RBTs, with three entry points (April – September 2011, August – January 2012, February – July 2012), so that applicant groups can stage and organize regional entry and launch based on regional preferences, status of partnerships, and unique needs for team formation.