

# WorkNet Chairman's Report

PINELLAS

## Employment Statistics August 2008\*

6,631 Initial Unemployment Compensation Claims

↓ 16% July 2008

↑ 134% August 2007

### Unemployment Rate

- 6.6% Pinellas, August '08
- 6.9% Tampa Bay MSA, August '08
- 6.8% Florida, August '08
- 6.1% U.S., August '08

\* Source: Agency for Workforce Innovation; Numbers Not Seasonally Adjusted

To help reinvigorate the economy, AWI is working to support Governor Crist's economic stimulus initiative, *Accelerate Florida*. One of the major components of *Accelerate Florida* is job creation. To create more jobs for Floridians, the Governor has directed state agencies to expedite construction and capital outlay projects, remove burdensome regulations that impede job growth, and create think tanks to enhance Florida's business-friendly environment.

Pinellas Civilian Labor Force  
480,793

Unemployed Pinellas Citizens  
31,551

Over-the-Year Job Growth  
Tampa-St. Pete-Clearwater  
MSA  
-21,800 jobs in 2008

Annual Wage  
(Pinellas County '07p)  
\$38,007



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## October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month

During National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that our Nation's promise extends to all our citizens. Millions of Americans live with disabilities, and many other Americans will become disabled at some point in their lives. To integrate people with disabilities more fully into every aspect of life, our country is working to advance greater freedoms at work, in schools, and throughout communities. By expanding employment opportunities and fighting false perceptions that hinder people living with disabilities from joining the workforce, we can uphold America's moral values, strengthen our economy, and make America a more hopeful place. More than 7 years ago, the New Freedom Initiative has increased access for people with disabilities through technology, provided additional educational opportunities for youth, and integrated more Americans into the workforce. To learn more about the Federal Government's disability-related programs, please visit [www.DisabilityInfo.gov](http://www.DisabilityInfo.gov).

## Connecting Business & Education

### Collaborative Industry Forums Scheduled for 2008-2009

Thank you to all that attended the Second Annual "Taking the Next Step" Business and Education Summit" hosted by WorkNet Pinellas on September 18th. Over 200 professionals attended the event, sharing their experiences and expertise in the areas surrounding their industry in terms of business needs and educational goals. Results from this year's summit are forthcoming and will be ready within the month.

Between October 2008 and May 2009, WorkNet will again host industry-specific forums that will offer businesses a chance to learn about training funding opportunities for their organizations and have their voice heard by educators in regards to curriculum development and class offerings. The industry groups will then meet again in September 2009 at the annual Summit to review industry accomplishments over the past year. Below is the list of industry sectors that have been identified, along with the forum

schedule. If you are interested in attending, please contact Kristin Dailey at [kdailey@worknetpinellas.org](mailto:kdailey@worknetpinellas.org).

#### Forum Schedule

Each forum will be held at the EpiCenter (13805 58<sup>th</sup> Street North) in Clearwater from **7:30 - 8:30 AM** (except IT).

Hospitality/ Retail	October 23, 2008
Healthcare	November 6, 2008
Manufacturing/ Aviation	January 29, 2008
Construction	February 19, 2009
Information Technology	March 19, 2009 (11:30-12:30)
Financial/ Professional Services	April 16, 2009
Automotive	May 21, 2009

## Upcoming Events & Meetings

- **October 31, 9:00 AM**  
Finance Committee Meeting  
EpiCenter—WorkNet Admin
- **November 5, 11:45 AM**  
Executive Committee Meeting  
EpiCenter—WorkNet Admin
- **November 11**  
**Veterans' Day**  
**ALL OFFICES CLOSED**
- **November 12, 12:00 PM**  
WorkNet Wednesday  
EpiCenter
- **November 12, 9:00 AM**  
Business & Economic Development Meeting  
EpiCenter—WorkNet Admin
- **November 14, 9:00 AM**  
Youth Economic Opportunity Meeting  
EpiCenter—WorkNet Admin
- **November 14-16**  
**RibFest**  
**WorkNet Career & Training Fair**  
Vinoy Park, St. Petersburg
- **November 21, 9:00 AM**  
Finance Committee Meeting  
EpiCenter—WorkNet Admin
- **November 21, 9:00 AM**  
Public Relations Committee Meeting  
EpiCenter—WorkNet Admin
- **November 25, 9:00 AM**  
One Stop Consortium Meeting  
EpiCenter—WorkNet Admin

## Youth Connect: Matthew's Story

WorkNet Pinellas, in conjunction with the Pinellas Education Foundation, offers Youth Connect Program services for youth between the ages of 14 and 21 years. Youth Connect is designed to provide a range of services and resources to assist qualified youth to enroll and successfully complete educational and training programs. Once such success story comes from Matthew K. In his own words, Matthew shares with us his experience.

*"Hi. I'm Matthew K. I used to be in high school. I hung out with the bad crowd. The crowd that skipped everyday. I started skipping school half way through my freshman year. I didn't stop until the end of my tenth grade year. By the time I had dropped out I had skipped 182 days in two years and had a GPA of 0.0025. I thought I was invisible. All of last school year I was sitting at home doing nothing with my life. I saw a couple of commercials on TV about colleges and how anyone could attend. So I started to think about my life and what I wanted to do, but I had no clue. In October of last year I started going to GED school. I wasn't able to take my GED test until March. I passed my math, science and social studies, but failed writing and reading. I thought that I was a complete loser after that. I moved in with my dad and he talked me into giving it another chance. I started going to the Dixie GED school at the end of April and met Ms. Roberts and Amy (Youth Skills). They helped me a lot. Ms. Roberts helped me bring my writing up from 380 to a 430 in four weeks. She also helped me bring my reading up from a 390 to a 500. She had a lot of faith in me and I never had anyone stick with me and help me to the end. I took the GED again and passed by over 200 points. While I was in class I met Amy. She helped me get to where I am today. She helped me to get everything ready for when I started school. Now I'm at PTEC studying automotive tech and when I graduate in 18 months I am planning on moving to diesel. Even though I have made bad choices in my life, I refuse to not make a name for myself. I am living proof that you can make all the mistakes in life, but you always have another chance."*

## Pinellas Area Federal Contractors Association Public Launch Announced



The Board of Directors of the Pinellas Area Federal Contractors Association (PAFCA) is pleased to announce its public launch at an upcoming reception on October 21st. PAFCA is a not-for-profit business association that represents an extensive collaboration of area companies large and small. PAFCA's mission is to promote federal contracting opportunities and to provide training and education for companies either engaged in federal contracting or with the potential for performing federal contracting or subcontracting work. PAFCA is pleased to have the support of many small businesses, leading regional economic development agencies,

and some of the Bay Area's largest employers, including Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, Raytheon, CONAX Florida, SAIC and others. The launch event is scheduled for 4:00 PM at the Seminole Campus of St. Petersburg College. For additional information, please refer to [www.floridafederalcontractors.org](http://www.floridafederalcontractors.org). For those wishing to attend the event, please email [rsvp@floridafederalcontractors.org](mailto:rsvp@floridafederalcontractors.org). WorkNet is a supporting partner of PACFA and will provide targeted employer services for all members.

## Homeless Employment Support

Pinellas County and the City of Clearwater sponsored a Homeless Support Event on September 27th at the Harborview Center. Over 70 social services providers were on hand to assist more than 1,000 homeless individuals and families. The services ran the gamut from complete medical screening to providing work shoes and underwear. In addition, a full breakfast and lunch were provided.

WorkNet Pinellas was asked to provide employment services for those homeless individuals who were job-ready. It was enlightening to find more than 30% of the homeless that attended had

jobs, but were looking for better positions. WorkNet worked out of a mobile One Stop van provided by the State Agency for Workforce Innovation. This is a modern, self-contained unit that provides its own electricity and satellite Internet and telephone connections at eight work stations. The job seekers were able to access the Employ Florida Marketplace system and apply for jobs and prepare their resumes.

Thanks to the volunteers from WorkNet Pinellas that provided employment services during the 8 hour operation including Dominique Van Kirk, Robyn Conley and JP Quinton-Scott.