

Workforce Florida: Supporting Energy Workforce Development

QUICK RESPONSE TRAINING RURAL UTILITY PROJECT

A special Quick Response Training (QRT) grant of up to \$1.5 million is available for training newly hired and/or other employees for utility industry jobs in Florida's 32 rural counties. Training may include occupations associated with energy, alternative energy, water, wastewater, solar, photovoltaic as well as other positions identified as critical to the utility industry.

This new initiative seeks to boost employment and workforce development in rural communities in energy, a growing and vital industry sector. With about half of its workforce slated for retirement in the next five to 10 years, Florida's energy sector is facing a "graying" of its workforce. In addition, Florida's energy industry is challenged with meeting increasing power demand prompted by a growing population with a shrinking pool of technically skilled workers.

This project not only benefits Florida utility companies seeking to bolster their workforce, but it also positions Floridians to take advantage of in-demand, high-wage jobs. The average salaries for the most-needed energy occupations range from more than \$52,000 to nearly \$65,000 a year, compared to the state average of about \$38,500. These jobs are never offshored.

Project funding will be directed within existing QRT guidelines. As with other QRT grants, the Rural Utility Project is structured to be flexible and to "respond quickly" to meet businesses' training objectives. Workforce Florida, Inc., administers the project.

RURAL UTILITY PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- Training must be customized and unique to the utility
- Eligible trainees must be permanent, full-time employees with the industry
- Eligible trainees must be Florida residents
- Training must occur after the approval date of the application and before the end of the contract (24 months)

Since 2000, the Quick Response Training Program has awarded more than \$59 million to provide customized training to more than 66,800 employees for more than 265 businesses and industries throughout Florida.



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