



## **2020 Legislative Communication Series**

### **“Workforce Development”**

August 26, 2020

Dear Florida Legislator,

An esteemed colleague once coined the phrase: “Workforce is the currency of economic development” – and he was spot on. Business could not be conducted nor transactions completed without a ready and trainable workforce. As economic developers, we maintain and support close relationships with the CareerSource offices within our regions as well as with our local school districts and post-secondary educational institutions.

Local businesses, whether they are manufacturers, R&D entities or professional service providers, need – no, demand – a steady pipeline of trained and trainable workers. This workforce pipeline, whose skill sets are continuously growing and changing as industries pivot to accommodate an ever-changing market, is crucial to Florida’s economic growth.

Our partners at CareerSource offer training programs vital in assisting companies that are relocating to, or expanding in, our state, to train new hires and upskill incumbent workers. Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships within our key industries often lead to full-time and rewarding careers for those who participate. Plus, many of our school districts and state colleges are enhancing their vocational training programs to accommodate the ever-changing needs of today’s business environment.

The Manufacturing Boot Camp is one of those programs. It provides high school seniors an opportunity to experience, first-hand, today’s manufacturing environment. Realizing that not all students are college-bound, this program provides seniors the chance to build a career rather than build-up student debt. Today’s manufacturing facilities are clean, high-tech and high production, offering full-time higher-wage jobs with benefits. The week-long Boot Camp program immerses students onto the production floor of local manufacturing facilities, touring several companies per day. There they can ask questions of the owner or production manager, while learning various aspects of the company’s operations. It also gives the employer an opportunity to get to know the students, possibly consider them as a new hire. Additionally, students complete a soft-skills program, learning the importance of being part of a team and respect in the workplace, among many other topics.

As we develop new and innovative programs to accommodate our post-COVID business world, a trained and trainable workforce remains one of the top three “must haves” when companies are considering a suitable site for their new or expanding business. Economic development works hand-in-glove with CareerSource, our school districts, post-secondary education and our elected officials to ensure that Florida continues to be a desirable business location, thereby providing jobs for our local residents while diversifying our tax base.

Thank you for your leadership and continued support.

Sincerely,