

Agency for Workforce Innovation/Florida Department of Veterans Affairs

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CITIZEN SOLDIER MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM FUNDS AVAILABLE THROUGH JUNE 2006

TALLAHASSEE— Susan Pareigis, Director of the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, today emphasized continued availability of the Citizen Soldier Program that allows private employers to apply for grants to help them supplement pay for their employees who are called to active duty.

Federal law requires that employers retain the same or similar jobs, pay and benefits waiting for employees who are away on military duty. The Citizen Soldier Program provides matching grants to Florida employers who pay wages to employees while they are serving in the United States Armed Forces Reserves or the Florida National Guard on federal active duty.

The Citizen Soldier Program reimburses private employers up to one-half of the difference between the amount of monthly wages paid before the employee was called to federal active duty and the amount of the employee's active duty compensation.

"Florida's citizen soldiers and their families live and work in a condition of constant readiness to serve the state and our nation," said Susan Pareigis, Director of the Agency for Workforce Innovation. "It is important that we recognize their contributions and sacrifices and offer assistance to those employers across the state who value and support their sacrifices."

The program is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Florida employers are encouraged to learn more about the Citizen Soldier Program by calling (800) 342-3450 or visiting

http://www.floridajobs.org/citizen_soldier/index.html

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Citizen Soldier Matching Grant Program
Page 2

The Agency for Workforce Innovation is the lead state workforce agency and directly administers the state's Labor Market Statistics program, Unemployment Compensation, Early Learning and various workforce development programs. The office of Early Learning, a division within the agency, provides oversight of Florida's school readiness programs and is the lead entity for implementing the state's Voluntary Prekindergarten program.

Workforce development policy and guidance in Florida is provided by Workforce Florida, Inc. Workforce Florida and the Agency for Workforce Innovation are partners in the Employ Florida network which includes 24 Regional Workforce Boards who deliver services through nearly 100 One-Stop Career Centers around the state.

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