
President's High Growth Job Training Initiative

Florida Atlantic University (FAU) Biotech Training Program



Grant amount: \$2,325,303

Grantee: The Workforce Alliance, Inc.

Key Partners: Workforce Development Board of the Treasure Coast; Florida Atlantic University; Indian River Community College; The Office of the Governor; Workforce Florida, Inc.; The Agency for Workforce Innovation; Palm Beach County's government, schools, Business Development Board, and Economic Development Council; The Scripps Research Institute; and regional biotechnology employers.

Grant activities will take place mostly in Palm Beach County, Florida.

Challenge:

The decline in industries such as manufacturing has resulted in a significant downsizing of employees in Palm Beach County. Simultaneously, the region's biotechnology industry is experiencing significant growth, particularly with the California-based Scripps Institute's decision to expand in South Florida. Besides the dozens of existing area biotech firms, the Scripps move will spark a sharp rise in jobs.

Addressing the Challenge:

With its grant, the FAU Biotech Training Program will retrain employed and unemployed workers to build careers in biotech. FAU's Biotech Training Program will establish a biotech career ladder and develop curriculum as well as a program for participants to obtain a postgraduate level certificate in Biotechnology and Bioinformatics. A B.S. or M.S. degree in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology also will be offered. The program will include distance education and employer-supported apprenticeship. The initial certificate training program will be relatively short, with program completion achieved in one year. Participants that excel will advance to a one-year lab research program at FAU.

Projected Outcomes:

- Development of a biotech career ladder with certificate programs and continued development of a B.S. and M.S. in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology;
- Enrollment of 110 individuals with a B.S. degree in math or science in skills upgrading/ retraining programs in the biotech field;
- Creation of biotech career opportunities for participants living on the Treasure Coast by incorporating distance learning and upgrading lab facilities;
- Increased involvement of One-Stop Career Centers and Faith-Based and Community Organizations in recruiting and referring eligible participants.

