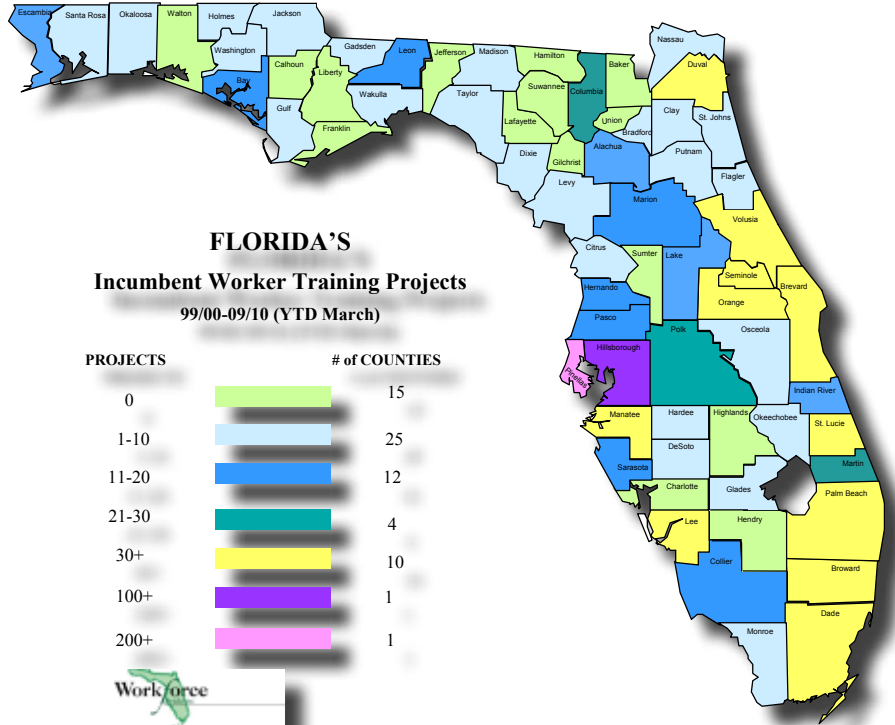


# What's an IWT?

Ask Pinellas County, #1 in IWT Grant Awards



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For the sixth year, **Pinellas County**, Florida is leading the state in **Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)** grant awards, proving itself once again the Ideal Business Location. "With the IWT program, over 30 Pinellas County companies have trained more than 2,100 employees this year," attests Mike Meidel, Director of **Pinellas County Economic Development**. "Through retention visits conducted by our staff, we hear straight from Pinellas businesses just how important it is that they continuously improve and advance their employees' skills. The IWT program provides the financial means for businesses to address training needs, keeping those businesses operating successfully – and keeping them here in Pinellas."

The Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) program provides training to currently employed workers at Florida companies for the purpose of maintaining competitiveness in a global economy and for business retention. The program is open to businesses that have been in operation for at least one year and employ at least one full-time employee, with funding priority given to businesses in qualified **targeted industries**. Structured to be flexible to meet each business' training objectives, businesses can use public, private or their own in-house training providers, based on the nature of the training.

**Coca-Cola North America** utilized its IWT award to train 30 employees this year at its Minute Maid

production facility in the city of **Dunedin**. The facility has been creating and retaining jobs in Pinellas for around 60 years. PCED has worked with Coca-Cola to identify opportunities and options that benefit company goals, assisting the beverage giant with a past IWT in which it found great success. This year, Coca-Cola applied for and received another IWT grant, which will help this key employer lower its costs of production and ensure another half-century of success in Pinellas.

At the opposite end of the county, **MTS Medication Technologies, Inc.** is utilizing the IWT program as it continues its efforts to innovate and find efficiencies in medication adherence packaging systems. "We are committed to exceeding customer expectations and achieving operational excellence. By developing and expanding our employee's skills, we expect to achieve our objectives and ensure MTS maintains its position as a global leader," explains Stephanie Mueller, Human Resource Manager at MTS. MTS' IWT award of \$25,388 will train 45 employees at its **St. Petersburg** facility.

At **Sea Sub Systems, Inc.**, keeping its staff well-trained is as much a matter of safety as it is business strategy. The commercial diving company, located in the Bay Pines area of Pinellas County, specializes in underwater vessel husbandry including in-water surveys, underwater welding, and underwater salvage. "We really must make certain our employees are fully trained in the safest and most advanced underwater repair methods to do the best work and stay competitive within the worldwide ship maintenance industry," asserts Anne LaMaire of Sea Sub Systems. "With the IWT grant, we'll train eight of our workers in specialized underwater welding and propeller repair techniques that are second to none in the industry. We will also be able to upgrade our Captain and crew for Hazmat response training and 500 ton - 200 mile capabilities. The IWT grant directly benefits our workers and strengthens our company in the worldwide ship repair market."

Full service micro motion solutions company **MicroMo Electronics, Inc.** has also found value in the IWT program, employing its grant award to train 18 employees in unincorporated Pinellas County. Dodd



Disler, Vice President and COO of MicroMo, states, “Our customers are our number one focus; how best to ensure their satisfaction? By consistently delivering the best products available. We can do that only by continuously advancing our staff’s knowledge, and training is a huge part of that formula. With the IWT grant, we can add to our existing employees’ skills, keeping top-rate workers with MicroMo in the long-term.”

And keeping employees in jobs is a key concern for Pinellas County. “The IWT program is one of the best retention tools we have,” says Meidel. “Look over the past ten years of IWT grant awards in Florida - **Pinellas County is the frontrunner**, having facilitated more than 200 IWT projects to date. That’s 200 projects that might otherwise have moved out of Pinellas in search of better opportunities. When we conduct our retention visits, PCED staff members listen to what challenges are being faced by local businesses and suggest tools like the IWT program to aid their growth. We assist with the application process and follow up to make certain our companies have all of the information and support they need. That’s what makes us number one – our commitment as a community to retaining jobs in Pinellas County.”

Explore the **Incumbent Worker Training** grant program and other **incentives** available in Pinellas **here**. Contact a Business Development Manager to discuss the options at (727) 464-7332.

