



For Immediate Release

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**CareerSource Central Florida Announces Delivery of
Workforce Solutions to Combat Opioid Crisis**

\$2.7M Grant Will Support Businesses and Individuals Impacted by the Opioid Epidemic

Orlando, Fla., -- [CareerSource Central Florida \(CSCF\)](#), Florida's second largest regional workforce board, has launched "Fostering Opioid Recovery through Training & Employment (FORTE)" – a four-year initiative focused on engaging businesses and individuals affected by the opioid crisis. As part of \$5M awarded to the State of Florida from the U.S. Department of Labor and administered by the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), CSCF received \$2.7M aimed at supporting and training businesses whose employees may be impacted by opioids. In addition, the grant will also help build new and emerging career pathways that support workforce needs resulting from the opioid crisis and will assist individuals in navigating their recoveries.

"The underlying meaning of FORTE is strength and so it is fitting that the solutions provided by CareerSource Central Florida not only provide educational and awareness programs to ensure more support and recovery from the opioid crisis occur, but that these solutions further strengthen the workforce of the community overall," said Pam Nabors, President and CEO, CareerSource Central Florida. "CareerSource Central Florida is honored to be working alongside the community to address such a critical need for so many individuals and businesses."

A complimentary informational webinar will be held for businesses aiming to learn more about the human resources and NARCAN training that will be available beginning in September on Tuesday, June 29 from 10 am – 11 am. For those interested in participating, they may register at www.careersourcecf.com/FORTEwebinar.

CSCF will focus on the following areas, together with Project Opioid:

- **Training for Human Resources Teams:** Through partnerships with local providers, CSCF will offer education and training to businesses and human resources professionals throughout Central Florida on how to identify and support employees who may be impacted by opioids. This includes complimentary employer workshops and seminars and supporting the enhancements of Employee Assistance Programs to include opioid awareness and recovery. The training will also include educating businesses on how to administer the life-saving nasal spray naloxone or NARCAN®.
- **Developing Talent to Support Careers Helping those in Recovery:** To encourage participants to enter professions addressing the opioid crisis, CSCF will offer complimentary scholarships providing relevant skills training for participants to obtain careers supporting individuals in recovery. This includes partnering with treatment centers to offer short-term training/certifications for "recovery peer specialist" and "recovery support specialist" roles.

- **Assisting Individuals Navigating Their Recoveries**: CSCF will partner with recovery and treatment centers to offer career opportunities for those in recovery, establish a direct referral system to respect privacy by working directly with CSCF, and provide case-by-case funding for relapse treatment as funding allows.

"Project Opioid is so proud to partner with CareerSource Central Florida in sharing the FORTE program with our region," said Project Opioid Founder and CEO, Andrae Bailey. "Our workforce is impacted in so many ways by the opioid and overdose epidemic. By involving CEOs, business owners and Human Resources personnel through training, and also by expanding Central Florida's inventory of Peer Recovery Specialists, FORTE is positioned to help bring about real, and positive change."

Andrae continues, "as businesses prepare for a post-COVID "return to normal," the challenges that impact the community, from CEO to line managers, an overarching concern has already emerged: workforce availability and fighting for workers – especially in the hospitality, trade and logistics and construction industries.

Among those hurdles is the exploding rate of opioid dependency and overdoses that has emerged during the pandemic. Statistics prove that the workforce is impacted by drug use. Particularly in certain industries, this "crisis within a pandemic" is going to have a major impact on Florida's workforce."

According to the [CDC](#), more than 81,000 Americans died of an overdose in the 12 months ending in May 2020 – ***the highest number of overdose deaths ever recorded in 12 months***. Central Florida experienced a 57% increase during that time.

About CareerSource Central Florida

CareerSource Central Florida (CSCF) is Florida's second largest regional workforce board that is state and federally funded with an annual operating budget of \$30.5 million. CSCF provides comprehensive services to connect career seekers and local businesses at no cost. Services include screening and hiring talent; employee training and education; paid internships and no cost skills training and education programs. In fiscal year 2019-2020, CSCF served nearly 80,000 career seekers and 4,000 businesses. It helped advance skills for more than 1,800 career seekers and placed more than 6,300 individuals in jobs across Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Lake and Sumter Counties. For more information, visit www.CareerSourceCentralFlorida.com.

About Project Opioid

Launched in 2018, [Project Opioid](#) is a public-private non-profit partnership operating in six Florida regions (Orlando, Tampa, Miami-Dade, Ft. Lauderdale, West Palm, Jacksonville) that is dedicated to using a community collaboration model that connects faith, business, and philanthropy leaders with government, criminal justice, healthcare, education, and frontline service providers to help save lives. Project Opioid is committed to providing cutting-edge research, to showcasing and implementing national "best-practices" Narcan distribution models, and working to streamline access to treatment through a "[No Wrong Door](#)" policy approach. www.ProjectOpioid.org

Media Contacts:

Lisa Burby
Vice President, Strategic Communications
CareerSource Central Florida
407-269-3922
lburby@careersourcecf.com

Carla Sosa
Communications Specialist
CareerSource Central Florida

689-222-4418

csosa@careersourcecf.com

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