

CareerEdge lauded in national study

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By Staff report

CareerEdge Funders Collaborative was lauded in a recent International Economic Development Council report on the changing landscape of workforce "learning systems."

The organization — a partnership of business, government and philanthropic organizations that uses public and private funding to provide opportunities for better jobs and wages in Manatee, Sarasota and Charlotte counties — was one of just five national workforce development organizations profiled in "Chutes & Ladders: The New Rules of the Game for Upskilling Workers."

The report attributed some of CareerEdge's success to its relationships with regional economic development organizations.

"CareerEdge has been able to effectively bridge the gap between employers, educators and job seekers. We are seeing a great increase in job and industry growth in our region, and CareerEdge has played a significant role in getting us there," Mark Huey, CEO of the Economic Development Corp. of Sarasota County, said about the report.

The council also highlighted CareerEdge's use of data to drive its workforce investments, citing its "proactive, demand-driven approach to workforce development that benefits both local employers and workers."

The report found that employees who actively learned while on the job — through training and certificate or degree programs — were more productive, accomplished their goals more often and had a better sense of well-being about their jobs.

Employers said their support of the “working learner” environment enabled them to retain and attract employees.

"We have tackled workforce development through an economic development lens since inception," CareerEdge executive director Mireya Eavey said.

In the Sarasota-Manatee region, CareerEdge says it has helped local workers receive more than 2,000 raises, for an average increase of \$2.42 in hourly pay; 540 promotions; and \$15,200 in bonuses.

CareerEdge also has paid for more than 3,100 training sessions and increased total wages in the region by \$23 million, the report found.

CareerEdge was created with funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the City of Bradenton Central Community Redevelopment Agency, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Bank of America, the Bradenton 14th Street Community Redevelopment Agency, Bradenton Downtown Development Authority and the Manatee Community Action Agency. It is also supported by contributions from the Charles and Margery Barancik Foundation, Microsoft, Sarasota County Government, Jane's Trust, JP Morgan Chase, the Scheidel Foundation and United Way Suncoast.