

## Florida Job Growth Program Fund

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### Issue

Summarize Florida's recently enacted Florida Job Growth Grant Fund and compare it to similar Connecticut programs.

### Summary

Enacted in June 2017, [The Florida Job Growth Grant Fund](#) (i.e., the fund) provides \$85 million in FY 18 to improve public infrastructure and enhance job training programs, but may not be spent to exclusively benefit specific businesses. The Florida [Department of Economic Opportunity](#) (DOE) and [Enterprise Florida](#), the state's quasi-public economic development marketing agency, administer the fund. Together, these entities identify projects, solicit project proposals, and make recommendations to the governor, who may approve them based on statutory criteria.

Among other things, Connecticut's economic development programs also fund infrastructure projects and workforce development programs, but, unlike the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund, may do so to benefit specific businesses.

### [Florida Job Growth Grant Fund \(HB 1A\)](#)

The fund allows the governor to approve a public infrastructure project if it promotes economic recovery in specific regions, diversifies the state's economy, or economically enhances a targeted industry. Infrastructure includes roads, bridges, tunnels, water supply, sewers, electrical grids, and telecommunications facilities that will be owned and used by the public or constructed

predominately for the public's benefit. The [targeted industries](#) are those in the clean technology, life sciences, information technology, aviation and aerospace, homeland security and defense, and financial and professional services sectors. (Attachment 1 compares Florida's and Connecticut's targeted industry sectors.)

The governor may approve grants to support certain workforce training programs operated by state colleges and technical training centers. A program qualifies for a grant only if it provides transferrable, sustainable workforce skills that apply to many different employers. DOE must work with [CareerSource Florida](#), the state's workforce policy and investment board, to ensure that these institutions are offering programs to the public without excluding unemployed or underemployed applicants. The institutions may use the grants to purchase equipment associated with the programs.

## **Comparable Connecticut Programs**

### ***Infrastructure***

Constructing infrastructure is an eligible activity under the Office of Policy and Management's [Urban Act](#) and [Small Town Economic Assistance](#) programs. These programs mostly fund physical development projects, including public infrastructure, such as road improvements, and private infrastructure, such as water and sewer line extensions for specific business property. Among other things, the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)'s [Manufacturing Assistance Act](#) (MAA) provides funds to businesses and municipalities for business development projects, including supporting infrastructure. (MAA is one of the programs DECD can tap to fund First Five Plus projects.)

Connecticut's process for funding infrastructure and other eligible economic development project proposals is largely bottom-up, with businesses, municipalities, and other eligible entities proposing projects for state funding. Florida's process under the Job Growth Grant Fund appears to take a top-down and bottom-up approach, since the law allows the state economic development agencies to identify projects on their own or solicit project proposals from other unspecified entities.

The two states' processes also differ with respect to the governor's role. In Connecticut, formal funding decisions are made by the administering agency, although many infrastructure projects also require the approval of the State Bond Commission, which is chaired by the governor. As stated above, Florida's governor decides whether to approve grants to a proposed public infrastructure or workforce development program.

## ***Workforce Training Grants***

The same differences that largely apply to the administration of infrastructure funds also apply to job training funds DECD administers. In Connecticut, job training is an eligible expense under MAA and DECD's Manufacturing Innovation Fund programs, but, unlike the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund, these programs may award grants to individual businesses to obtain educational and job training services provided by public and private educational and training institutions. Businesses and other eligible organizations must apply to DECD for these funds. In Florida, the economic development agencies may identify or solicit funding proposals for the governor's approval.

Like the fund's educational and job training component, the Connecticut Community Colleges' [Business and Industry Service Network](#) addresses the educational and training needs of business sectors as well as individual firms. Targeted sectors include advanced manufacturing, automation, biotechnology, and plastics and composites.

**Attachment 1: Comparison of Connecticut's and Florida's Targeted Industry Sectors**

<i>Connecticut</i>	<i>Florida</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health Care and Bioscience</li><li>• Financial Services and Media</li><li>• Advanced Manufacturing</li><li>• Digital Media</li><li>• Green Technology</li><li>• Tourism</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clean Tech</li><li>• Life Sciences</li><li>• Infotech</li><li>• Aviation and Aerospace</li><li>• Homeland Security and Defense</li><li>• Financial and Professional Services</li></ul>