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## **FloridaMakes Awarded National Science Foundation Grant for Future of Workforce Caucus**

**Orlando, FLA.** — FloridaMakes received a National Science Foundation grant to organize and execute the Technician Future of Work Issues Caucus for Florida Community Colleges and Manufacturers. The purpose of the event will be to gather key leadership from the advanced manufacturing industry along with its workforce and education stakeholders to foster a conversation around the future talent needs of the smart factory.

“To grow a world-class technical workforce and continue to ensure Florida’s manufacturing remains globally competitive, it is important to have reliable information about the knowledge and skills our talent pipeline will need to remain ahead of the curve,” said Kevin Carr, CEO of FloridaMakes.

The goal of the Caucus is to identify technologies in Florida’s small- to medium-sized manufacturers that directly contribute to Florida’s technicians’ skills gap. The project will first survey both manufacturers and 2-year college educators in Florida about future technical skills that will be used in manufacturing environments. Stakeholder organizations including Associated Industries of Florida, CareerSource Florida, the regional manufacturers associations across the state, the Florida Department of Education’s Division of Career, Technical, and Adult Education plus, Florida’s 28 state colleges and 48 technical centers will help distribute the questionnaires. The results will be reviewed by a select group of educators and manufacturers during the Caucus’ events. Outcomes and recommendations from this process will be shared with the public.

“The future of work is here. Now is the time to disrupt our education system to ensure for rapid, but high-quality training aligned to industry and emerging technologies,” said Henry Mack, Chancellor for Career, Technical and Adult Education at the Florida Department of Education. “This convening will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to come together to reimagine workforce education in view of greater social and economic mobility for many of Florida’s residents.”

Virtual meetings will take place on two dates: October 15, 2020 and during the Spring of 2021 on a date to be determined. The program will be led by FloridaMakes and the Florida Advanced Technological Education (FLATE) Center in partnership with the University of South Florida and the College of Central Florida.

“Florida’s wide range of manufacturing facility types and sizes presents a challenge for collecting the information needed to grow the talent pipeline demanded by Industry 4.0 technologies,” said Marilyn Barger, Director of FLATE. “The Caucus will bring leadership in the education and manufacturing sectors from all over the State together to discuss and determine the needed skills and to develop a unified approach.”

Recommendations published as a result of the Caucus will be used to implement changes in the Florida Department of Education's Standards and Benchmarks for Career and Technical Education. These Standards, with their accompanying Benchmarks, govern what is taught in Florida's college system, the technical colleges and Florida school district Career and Technical Education programs.

For more information about how to participate in the Future of Work Issues Caucus for Florida Community Colleges and Manufacturers please contact Dr. Marilyn Barger, Director, Florida Advanced Technological Education Center by email at [marilyn.barger@flate.org](mailto:marilyn.barger@flate.org) or by phone at 407.450.7206.

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#### **About the National Science Foundation**

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent federal agency that supports fundamental research and education across all fields of science and engineering. In fiscal year (FY) 2020, its budget is \$8.3 billion. NSF funds reach all 50 states through grants to nearly 2,000 colleges, universities and other institutions. Each year, NSF receives more than 50,000 competitive proposals for funding and makes about 12,000 new funding awards. For more information about the National Science Foundation visit [nsf.gov](https://www.nsf.gov)

#### **About FloridaMakes**

FloridaMakes is a statewide, industry-led, public-private partnership operated by an alliance of Florida's regional manufacturers associations with the sole mission of strengthening and advancing Florida's economy by improving the competitiveness, productivity and technological performance of its manufacturing sector, with an emphasis on small- and medium-sized firms. It accomplishes this by providing services focused on three principle value streams: technology adoption, talent development, and business growth. FloridaMakes is the official representative of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) National Network in the state of Florida, a program of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce. For more information about FloridaMakes, please visit [FloridaMakes.com](https://www.floridamakes.com) and follow [@FloridaMakes](https://twitter.com/FloridaMakes).

#### **About the Florida Advanced Technological Education (FLATE) Center**

FLATE is a Center of Excellence for advanced technological education and is committed to ensuring that Florida has a well-prepared workforce for advanced and emerging technologies in manufacturing by providing educational resources and strategies for curriculum, professional development and student recruitment in secondary and post-secondary education. FLATE was created in 2004 with a grant from the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education Program which is focused on improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education to meet the needs of American advanced technology industries. In 2020, FLATE became a part of the FloridaMakes network. For more information visit [FLATE.org](https://www.flate.org).