



For Immediate Release
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**CareerEdge Partners with STC to Offer
Tuition-Free Plumbing Program**

SARASOTA COUNTY, FL (August 1, 2016)

CareerEdge Funders Collaborative, a private workforce development non-profit, has partnered with Suncoast Technical College (STC) to offer a tuition-free *Plumbing Technology* certification program beginning this fall.

The 8-month class begins September 8th and will be held Monday through Friday, 7:45AM - 2:15PM, with both classroom and on-the-job training. Graduates of the plumbing program are highly sought after by local employers given the shortage of workers in this trade.

Through a mass mailing campaign, the college is targeting high school graduates from the last six years who have not entered a traditional college program.

"Our goal is to increase the number of 18-25 year-olds receiving an industry-recognized college credential in high demand occupations within our region in order to meet employer workforce needs and close skills gaps," explains CareerEdge Executive Director Mireya Eavey.

While the focus is on young adults, the program is open to students of any age. Once they complete the program, graduates will be able to enter apprenticeships with local employers leading to plumbing jobs with average wages of \$54,000 a year, according to the National Association of Home Builders.

Jaime DiDomenico at Cool Today, Plumbing Today and Energy Today reports that the construction sector in Sarasota-Manatee added 1,000 jobs in May over last year and demand is growing.

“The specialty trades, such as plumbing, will experience the biggest shortfalls due to specialized training needs and required schooling. While the needs are keen in the construction side of the business, the service side will steadily grow double digit percentage increases due to more homeowner occupancy,” DiDomenico explained.

CareerEdge will also fund internships for these plumbing students through its *Internship Reimbursement Program*, whereby employers receive up to \$1,500 for hiring an intern. The program provides financial incentives for local employers to utilize interns in high demand industries in order to meet their workforce needs.

“Our programs facilitate job creation and growth for local organizations, while moving individuals into family sustaining wage,” says Eavey.

Suncoast Technical College is hosting a Job Fair on August 8th from 5:00 -7:00PM in the main atrium of its Sarasota campus at: 4748 S Beneva Rd, Sarasota, FL 34233. Employers and college representatives will be available to speak with prospective students about the Plumbing Technology training program and other construction trade offerings at the school.

Prospective students and employers interested in participating in the Job Fair should contact Chuck Drake at Suncoast Technical College: (941) 924-1365 X62429.

“CareerEdge continues to be a major force in creating successful workforce development strategies for our region. This “Pathway to Apprenticeship” partnership will help Suncoast Technical College to continue to communicate and market its highly valued certification programs,” says Suncoast Technical College Director Dr. Todd Bowden.

About CareerEdge

CareerEdge is an innovative partnership of business, government, and philanthropic organizations that leverages public and private dollars to provide opportunities for better jobs and wages in Manatee, Sarasota, and Charlotte counties. The first regional collaborative of workforce investors in the southeastern United States to be designated as a site of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, CareerEdge was created with funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, City of Bradenton Central Community Redevelopment Agency, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Bank of America, Bradenton 14th Street Community Redevelopment Agency, Bradenton Downtown Development Authority, and 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, Scheidel Foundation and United Way Suncoast . For more information about CareerEdge and its partners, please visit www.careeredgefund.org or call 941.328.6985