

**STATE OF GEORGIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

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February 11, 2010

**Georgia Launches Hire Work Ready for Small Business
Small Businesses Eligible for Hiring, Training Reimbursement**

ATLANTA – Governor Sonny Perdue and Georgia Chamber of Commerce President and CEO George M. Israel III today announced the launch of Hire Work Ready, a new initiative designed to provide funding to small businesses that hire Work Ready certified employees.

“Our state’s small businesses are the engine that drives our economy,” said Governor Perdue. “To ensure our state’s long-term prosperity, it is imperative that we give them the tools necessary to not only weather the economic downturn, but emerge stronger and ready for growth.”

Companies employing 50 or fewer people are eligible to receive \$250 per certified Work Ready individual hired, up to \$1,250 total, to assist with hiring and training costs. The funding for Hire Work Ready comes from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

Georgia small businesses may apply for the reimbursement by visiting the Work Ready Web site (www.gaworkready.org) and following the Hire Work Ready link under the Employers tab to complete a short application. To be eligible, firms must participate in a Work Ready information session and be in good financial standing with the state.

“Georgia Work Ready is one of our state’s strongest economic development tools because it ensures we have the best possible workforce,” said Israel. “By hiring Work Ready certified individuals, our state’s small businesses can enjoy all the benefits larger employers enjoy – great productivity, lower training costs and higher morale.”

The Governor’s Office of Workforce Development, which oversees Georgia Work Ready, estimates Hire Work Ready will encourage the hiring of 2,000 certified Work Ready people by more than 400 small businesses throughout the state.

Georgia Work Ready is based on a skills assessment, certification and skills gap training for job seekers and a job profiling system for businesses. By identifying both the needs of business and the available skills of Georgia’s workforce, the state can more effectively generate the right talent for the right jobs. For more information, visit www.gaworkready.org.