

# Offering workforce gifts of the season you can unwrap all year long

By Laura Byrnes, APR, CPRC, Communications Manager, CareerSource CLM



Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanza, or any combination thereof, I think we can agree that this year, our celebrations may look and feel a little different. Regardless of how we celebrate the holidays -- whether we keep the size of family gatherings to a CDC-approved minimum, move the celebration outside or go virtual - one thing will not change: this is truly the most wonderful time of year.

Across the miles, ethernet or living room (socially distanced, of course), we'll make memories. And one memory is the giving of gifts that show our friends and family just how much they are valued and appreciated. Well, consider yourself part of the CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion family, and what better time to unwrap our gifts to you.

First, CareerSource CLM is the region's premier job placement service, helping businesses of all sizes flourish by meeting their workforce needs. We do that because we understand and support the unique challenges of industries critical to our region, such as manufacturing, healthcare, logistics, and IT.

And no, we did not put our foot on the brake during the worst days of COVID-19 and business shutdowns. We continued to provide all services virtually, and we assisted the state's unemployment compensation system to unsnarl backed-up claims.

We began safe, limited re-opening of our career centers in May and are now open to the public weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. - the requirement to make an appointment first has been lifted, but we still follow recommended safety protocols. At the same time, all services continue to be available by phone, Live Chat, email, online and videoconferencing, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Part of our services include exclusive hiring events, like the ones we held for Amazon and Dollar Tree. During our first quarter, July-September, we put on eight hiring events both virtually and socially-distanced, in-person. Of the 254 attendees, 225 or 88.5 percent were hired. That's a win-win for businesses and candidates.

At the top of this column, I noted how we'll likely celebrate the season a little differently this year due to the pandemic. One way CareerSource has adapted has been by putting on



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virtual job fairs that are as close to in-person as we can make them. The first was the Manufacturing and Logistics Career Fair in October, partnering with the Mid-Florida Regional Manufacturers Association, and the second was Paychecks for Patriots, which took place last month, in partnership with the Florida Department of Veteran's Affairs and others.

Both events looked different than usual, but we remain committed to embracing technology to allow candidates to come together with local businesses, meet in real time with hiring managers, learn about job openings and submit resumes. It's fast, free, and effective.

As I write this, it is still unclear whether we'll be able to hold some of our signature events in person or virtually, but moving into the New Year, we're committed as ever to collaborating with our school districts and other community partners to offer the annual Youth Career Expos in Citrus, Levy, and Marion counties. We are also working on the State of the Workforce Conference, which had to be canceled last spring.

**Two other gifts worth mentioning:**

Interested in a career that can really take off with a premier national company? We have partnered with Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control Ocala Operations to offer a two-year paid apprenticeship program for the Electronic Associate position. This is an extraordinary opportunity that wants to see their career trajectory take flight. To learn more, give us a call at 800-434-JOBS.

How would you like to sharpen employability skills or train up to land your dream job or, if you are an employer, upskill your staff? Then check out SkillUp Citrus Levy Marion, a dynamic online learning platform designed to help anyone improve workforce skills at a time, place, and pace, that is convenient to them. You may choose from more than 5,500 courses -- in everything from soft skills to project management -- that can lead to more than 180 certifications. You may take as many courses as you wish for as long as six months, at no charge. You can access the SkillUp portal at [citruslevymarion.skillupamerica.org](http://citruslevymarion.skillupamerica.org) or visit our website at [careersourceclm.com](http://careersourceclm.com).

However you make merry this season, your friends at CareerSource CLM hope you have a safe and happy holiday. And remember, we'll be here with more gifts for you to unwrap long after the tinsel and dreidels disappear.

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