



## 2021-2022 Florida Job Growth Grant Fund Public Infrastructure Grant Proposal

Proposal Instructions: Please read this document carefully and provide the information requested below. Some questions may request that a separate narrative be completed. If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.

### **Governmental Entity Information**

Name of Governmental Entity: Polk County

Government Federal Employer Identification Number: ██████████

Primary Contact Name: Todd Bond

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### **Public Infrastructure Grant Eligibility**

Pursuant to section 288.101, F.S., the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund was created to promote economic opportunity by improving public infrastructure and enhancing workforce training. Eligible entities that wish to access this grant fund must submit public infrastructure proposals that:

- Promote economic recovery in specific regions of the state, economic diversification or economic enhancement in a targeted industry. ([View Florida's Targeted Industries here:-](#))
- Are not for the exclusive benefit of any single company, corporation or business entity.
- Are for infrastructure that is owned by the public and is for public use or predominately benefits the Public.

## 1. Program Requirements:

(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

Each proposal must include the following information describing how the project satisfies eligibility requirements listed on page 1.

### A. Provide a detailed description of the public infrastructure improvements.

Awarded funding from the state will allow for the addition of a duplex wastewater lift station and 2.5 miles of 6-meter diameter wastewater force main, which may require existing force main improvements, septic tank retrofits, and land acquisition for easements. Funding will also support expenses related to project design and engineering consultation, which includes permitting and construction phase services.

This project will result in the pipeline expansion and sewer lift station modification necessary to support continued economic development in the rural area of Mulberry, Florida.

Modifying the lift station at this location will be a positive instigator for economic development in Polk County. The Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) is currently in the process of expanding its nationally recognized educational model in Mulberry, FL with the addition of a K-8<sup>th</sup> grade charter school on its existing property. RCMA is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that has been providing early childhood education in Polk County for more than 40 years to the surrounding community. Offering a variety of Head Start, School Readiness and VPK programs, RCMA is primarily state and federally funded.

The modified lift station and sewage connection will make their goals of providing care and education to 500 children as young as 6 weeks old to eight graders there, possible.

In addition, there are under-utilized commercial parcels of land in the surrounding areas with potential for development if sewer becomes more feasible there. Nearby mobile home parks have previously requested sewer expansion from the county to accommodate additional housing units. A packaging plant in the same vicinity could also benefit from this project.

The county project will enhance the economic diversification of the local community. The city sewer connection line from RCMA Mulberry campus site is approximately 5 miles East on I-60 (Exhibit B on site plan diagram) to the nearest sewer lift. This is a massive conversion from a septic tank system that is required prior to construction of the new charter school or attracting new projects to the area.

The time frame the proposed project is approximately 18 months from grant approval, during which engineering plans, public hearings for permitting, and county approval will take place.

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### B. Provide location of public infrastructure, including physical address and county of project.

The location of this public infrastructure begins at 4440 Academy Drive, Mulberry, Florida 33860 in Polk County. The project will extend sewage pipe from the address above, onto Route 60 East approximately 5 miles towards the local city sewer collection point.

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C. Is this infrastructure currently owned by the public YES

If no, is there a current option to purchase or right of way provided to the County?

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D. Provide current property owner.

Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA)

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E. Is this infrastructure for public use or does it predominately benefit the public? YES

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F. Will the public infrastructure improvements be for the exclusive benefit of any single company, corporation, or business entity? NO

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- G. Provide a detailed description of, and quantitative evidence demonstrating, how the proposed public infrastructure project will promote: (See attached document 1.G)
- Economic recovery in specific regions of the state;
  - Economic diversification; or
  - Economic enhancement of a Targeted Industry ([View Florida's Targeted Industries here.](#))
    - Describe how the project will promote specific job growth. Include the number of jobs that will be retained or created, and in which industry(ies) the new net jobs will be created using the North American Industry Classification System ([NAICS](#)) codes. Where applicable, you may list specific businesses that will retain or create jobs or make capital investment.
    - Provide a detailed explanation of how the public infrastructure improvements will connect to a broader economic development vision for the community and benefit additional current or future businesses.

Limited development in rural communities is becoming more and more detrimental to the poverty-stricken populations who live there and is a barrier to attracting new economic development opportunities that might provide relief.

Schools, are a prime example. The need may be present to increase classroom sizes, but rural schools struggle to compete for funding due to the nature of larger geographically rural areas serving lower student numbers than neighboring urban or suburban areas. Rural schools often have increased costs for providing transportation services across greater distances. In addition, there can be hidden expenses associated with schools in rural areas, as they often act as a hub for social, recreational, and cultural life for the families they serve.

Polk County's public infrastructure project will promote economic recovery by opening the door to economic diversification in an area that has been traditionally led by agriculture. The RCMA school expansion happening at 4440 Academy Drive, Mulberry, Florida 33860 is the tip of the ice berg. In addition to bringing in 100 new jobs to the area by 2030, the new school will provide top notch educational opportunities that develop the educated workforce needed to attract Florida's targeted industries.

RCMA was founded in 1965 to keep children safe while their farm working parents harvested fruit and vegetable crops from the fields. Not having alternative child care prior to RCMA opening centers, parents brought their children to work with them. Children often spent whole days in South Florida's fields, exposed to harsh and sometimes deadly environments. RCMA began by bringing mothers in from the fields and hiring them to be early childhood education teachers. RCMA began by caring for children of farm working families at two centers in South Florida and has grown to operate 65 child development centers, two K-8th grade charter schools, and several partner-family child-care homes and school age programs in 21 Florida counties. Investing a great deal in hiring and training teachers and staff from the communities they serve, RCMA is an economic development engine everywhere it has a presence. RCMA employs 1,700 people throughout the state and cares for about 5,500 children each year.

RCMA is the largest nonprofit provider of early childhood education in the state of Florida and is now a recognized charter school operator. RCMA's nationally recognized educational model meets the needs of low-income rural populations, and was recently voted on by the State Board of Education to be one of 6 Schools of Hope charter school operators. RCMA has a bold vision that expands from crib to high school and beyond.

By providing quality education, prioritizing parental involvement, and giving access to a variety of social services such as health and mental health resources, RCMA takes a holistic approach that strengthens not only the entire family of the children they serve, but strengthens the surrounding community.

Polk County is thrilled to have RCMA expanding in our southeast quadrant. They have a track record for being great support for rural families and a magnet for social services.

The Florida Department of Health has concluded that "150,000 to 200,000 migrant and seasonal farm workers and their families annually travel and work in Florida." (<https://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/migrant-farmworker-housing/index.html#:~:text=150%2C000%20to%20200%2C000%20migrant%20and,exceeds%20standards%20set%20by%20law>) Children in migrant families are often at a disadvantage due to language barriers and conflicting learning schedules as they transfer between school systems. Funding this project will help create economic diversification within a rural area of Polk County, Florida, which can contribute to the needs of the seventh fastest growing county in the nation (U.S. Census Bureau). The American Immigration Council states, "One in four workers in Florida is an immigrant, together making up a vital part of the state's labor force in a range of industries. Florida residents in immigrant-led households had \$98.5 billion spending power (after-tax income) in 2018, and 437,690 immigrant business owners accounted for 33 percent of all self-employed Florida residents, generating \$7.1 billion in business income." (<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-florida>)

Building and connecting the RCMA school to a broader access sewage line will create opportunities for future community business growth in the surrounding area. Families relying on the school will consider Polk County their home-base and local businesses will be established within the vicinity which will stoke the economy. Those businesses will be able to remain walking distance of the school by taking advantage of the newly built sewage connection.

The long-term goals of RCMA's strategic plan include the eventual construction of affordable housing near the new lift station site, which will make jobs at the school and surrounding businesses more attractive.

Specialized programming for RCMA school families provide wrap-around and referral services to family members of all ages to ensure needs are being met across the spectrum (medical, dental, housing, education, behavioral health, socialization, etc.) When migrant families are offered these supports, they are better equipped to become successful, contributing members of the local community. By building this lift station now, working families will have the ability to comfortably live and prosper in Polk County for generations to come.

An article from the New American Economy stated, "By infusing Florida with young workers, immigrants help replenish the workforce and strengthen the state's tax base. New Americans in Florida today serve as everything from farm laborers to entrepreneurs, making them critical

contributors to the state's economic success overall.”

(<http://research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/nae-fl-report.pdf>)

While some states only see a trickle of migrant workers throughout the year, Florida's economy continues to see permanent resident population growth among the migrant population. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development stated, “Florida, along with Texas and California, are regarded as the three sending states for migrants because most migrants will claim one of these three states as their home. This is generally where the migrant streams begin and where the farmworkers will return once the season has ended, to await the start of the next season. They are also the areas with the longest growing seasons. In many cases, migrants will travel alone to follow the crops, and their families will stay in the ‘sending state’, or home state, establishing a year-round residence. This is common in families with school age children; though there are many families who migrate together.”

(<https://www.hud.gov/states/florida/working/farmworker/commonquestions>)

The home-base that will flourish around RCMA for migrant workers and their families will undoubtedly contribute to the economic diversification of Polk County, Florida.

Once the lift station is modified, RCMA will be able to serve up to 500 students annually, as young as 6 weeks old to 8<sup>th</sup> graders - plus all other family members in those student's households. In places where RCMA has existing charter schools serving the migrant populations, a trend is noticed where families settle, and stay year-round. Seeing the great benefits RCMA offers them and their children, migrant workers make it a point to be at their home base before schools starts and stay until school ends for the year before migrating north following the harvest.

We expect the trend will be true at its Mulberry, FL location as well. Eventually, affordable housing will be erected, businesses will populate the area, and the growing migrant population will become even more critical to the Florida economy. It is estimated that the completion of this project will provide economic opportunities and education to incentivize new Floridians to call this rural area of Polk County home, potentially adding hundreds of individuals to the local workforce in jobs relating to agriculture, construction, manufacturing, warehousing, food services, and hospitality. An article titled, Economic Impact of Water/Sewer Facilities on Rural and Urban Communities, states, “Rural and urban water/sewer projects both generate much greater economic benefits than their total construction cost. Rural water/sewer facilities save and create permanent jobs, generate private investment, leverage additional government funds, and increase the property tax base.” [Rural America Vol. 17 Issue 4 \(usda.gov\)](#) Current and future businesses will prosper due to increased opportunities the modified lift station will bring to our community.

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## 2. Additional Information:

(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

- A. Provide the proposed commencement date and number of days required to complete construction of the public infrastructure project.

Proposed Commencement Date – August 2022 (if funds are secured)  
Construction Time – 18 months

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**B.** What permits are necessary for the public infrastructure project?

ROW, Utility, Drainage, and Road Permits.

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- C. Detail whether required permits have been secured, and if not, detail the timeline for securing these permits. Additionally, if any required permits are local permits, will these permits be prioritized?

No, permits have not been secured, our estimated 18-month projected timeline includes time to secure local permits.

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- D. What is the future land use and zoning designation on the proposed site of the infrastructure improvements, and will the improvements conform to those uses?

The property can be used for its existing uses (RCMA CDC Campus), and the future development of the Mulberry Charter School.

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- E. Will an amendment to the local comprehensive plan or a development order be required on the site of the proposed project or on adjacent property to accommodate the infrastructure and potential current or future job creation opportunities? If yes, please detail the timeline.

NO

There is already a conditional use approved from Polk County in place for RCMA.

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- F. Is the project ready to commence upon grant fund approval and contract execution? If no, please explain.

Yes       No

Yes

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- G. Does this project have a local match amount? YES

If yes, please describe the entity providing the match and the amount.

RCMA School will provide match as a private source for \$150,000.

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- H. Provide any additional information or attachments to be considered for this proposal. Maps and

other supporting documents are encouraged.

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### 3. Program Budget

(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

**Estimated Costs and Sources of Funding:** Include all applicable public infrastructure costs and other funding sources available to support the proposal.

1.) **Total Amount Requested**      **\$ 4,000,000**  
     Florida Job Growth Grant Fund

**A. Other Public Infrastructure Project Funding Sources:**

City/County                      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Private Sources                \$150,000

Other (grants, etc.)            \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Other Funding**        **\$150,000**

**B. Public Infrastructure Project Costs:**

Construction                    \$2,150,000

Reconstruction                \$500,000

Design & Engineering        \$300,000

Land Acquisition                \$1,000,000

Land Improvement              \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other                                \$200,000

Please Specify: Utilities Admin.

**Total Project Costs**         **\$4,150,000**

**Note:** The total amount requested must be calculated by subtracting the total other public infrastructure project funding sources in A. from the total public infrastructure project costs in B.

- C. Provide a detailed budget narrative, including the timing and steps necessary to obtain the funding and any other pertinent budget-related information.

Once this shovel-ready project funding has been awarded, immediate action will be taken to ensure completion before the 2023-2024 school year begins.

Costs include:

Construction = \$2,150,000 (including \$1,800,000 for 2.5 miles of 6-meter diameter wastewater force main and \$350,000 for a duplex wastewater lift station)

Reconstruction = \$500,000 (including \$400,000 for existing force main improvements and \$100,000 for septic tank retrofits)

Design & Engineering = \$300,000 for design, permitting, and construction phase services from an engineering consultant

Land Acquisition = \$1,000,000 for right-of-way easement purchase required for wastewater force main installation

Other = \$200,000 to support the administrative role the Utilities Division from the Polk County Board of County Commissioners will play in the implementation of this project.

#### 4. Approvals and Authority

(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

- A. If the governmental entity is awarded grant funds based on this proposal, what approvals must be obtained before it can execute a grant agreement with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (e.g., approval of a board, commission or council)?

Approval will be required from the Polk County Board of County Commissioners.

If board authorization is not required, who is authorized to sign?

N/A

- B. If approval of a board, commission, council or other group is needed prior to execution of an agreement between the governmental entity and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity:

- i. Provide the schedule of upcoming meetings for the group for a period of at least six months.
- ii. State whether entity is willing and able to hold special meetings, and if so, upon how many days' notice.

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- C. Attach evidence that the undersigned has all necessary authority to execute this proposal on behalf of the governmental entity. This evidence may take a variety of forms, including but not limited to: a delegation of authority, citation to relevant laws or codes, policy documents, etc.

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I have express authority to sign this proposal on behalf of the above-described entity and to the best of my knowledge, that all data and information submitted in proposal is truthful and accurate and no material fact has been omitted.

Name of Governmental Entity: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title of Authorized Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Representative Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Date: \_\_\_\_\_

