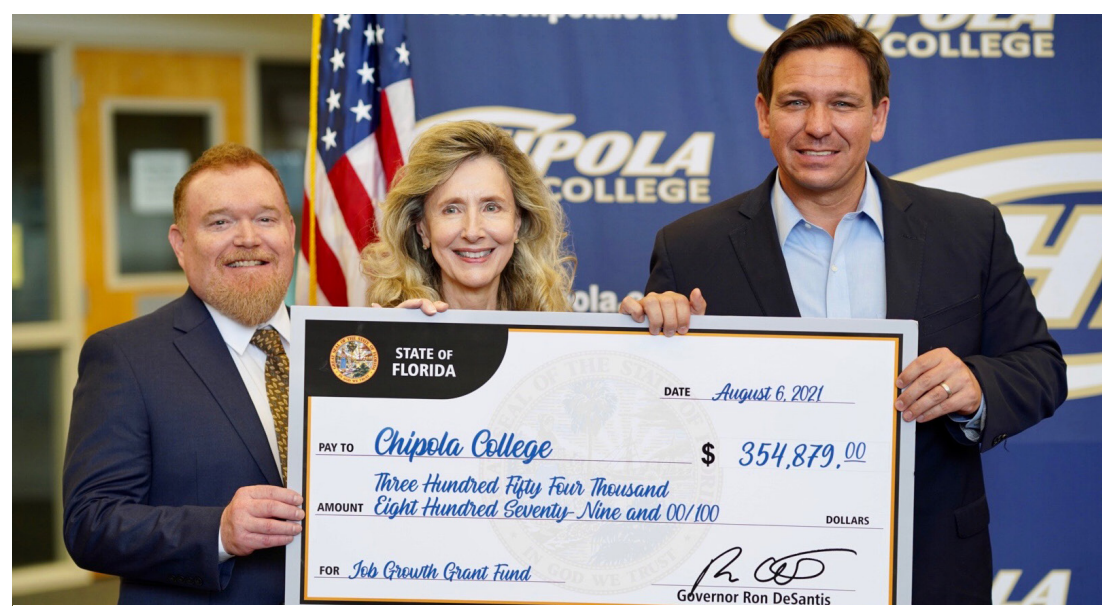


FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of*  
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY






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**LETTER FROM  
THE SECRETARY  
DANE EAGLE**

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The Honorable Ron DeSantis,  
Governor of Florida  
Plaza Level 05, The Capitol  
400 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

The Honorable Wilton Simpson,  
President, Florida Senate  
Room 409, The Capitol  
404 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

The Honorable Chris Sprowls,  
Speaker, Florida House of  
Representatives  
Room 420, The Capitol  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1300

Dear Governor DeSantis, President Simpson, and Speaker Sprowls:

Under Governor Ron DeSantis' leadership, Florida continues to excel as the nation's leader in economic recovery. While other states continue to face economic hardship following the pandemic, Florida has experienced continued month-over-month job growth and labor force growth that far exceeds the national rates. This year, the Department has also worked to adapt and overcome the significant challenges the entire nation faced in order to accomplish the Department's goals and priorities.

As Secretary, I am submitting the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's Annual Report for fiscal year 2020-2021. By statute, this report includes strategic updates on key economic development programs, including the Black Business Loan Program and the Rural Economic Development Initiative, as well as annual updates from our partners: CareerSource Florida, Enterprise Florida, Inc., Space Florida, and VISIT Florida. This report will provide an update on the health of Florida's economy and opportunities to assist with economic recovery and future resiliency.

Under Governor DeSantis' leadership, in the coming year, the Department will prioritize opportunities to bolster Florida's economy by making strategic investments in Florida communities. As part of the Governor's focus on workforce initiatives, the Department will continue its efforts to enhance the development of our workforce and offer ways for Floridians to improve and grow their skills. At the same time, the Department will continue to prioritize the modernization of Reemployment Assistance benefits systems, so that all eligible Floridians receive assistance as quickly as possible.

It is a pleasure to share this report and highlight the great work of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity and our partners. If you have any questions or would like to receive additional information, please contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Dane Eagle  
Secretary

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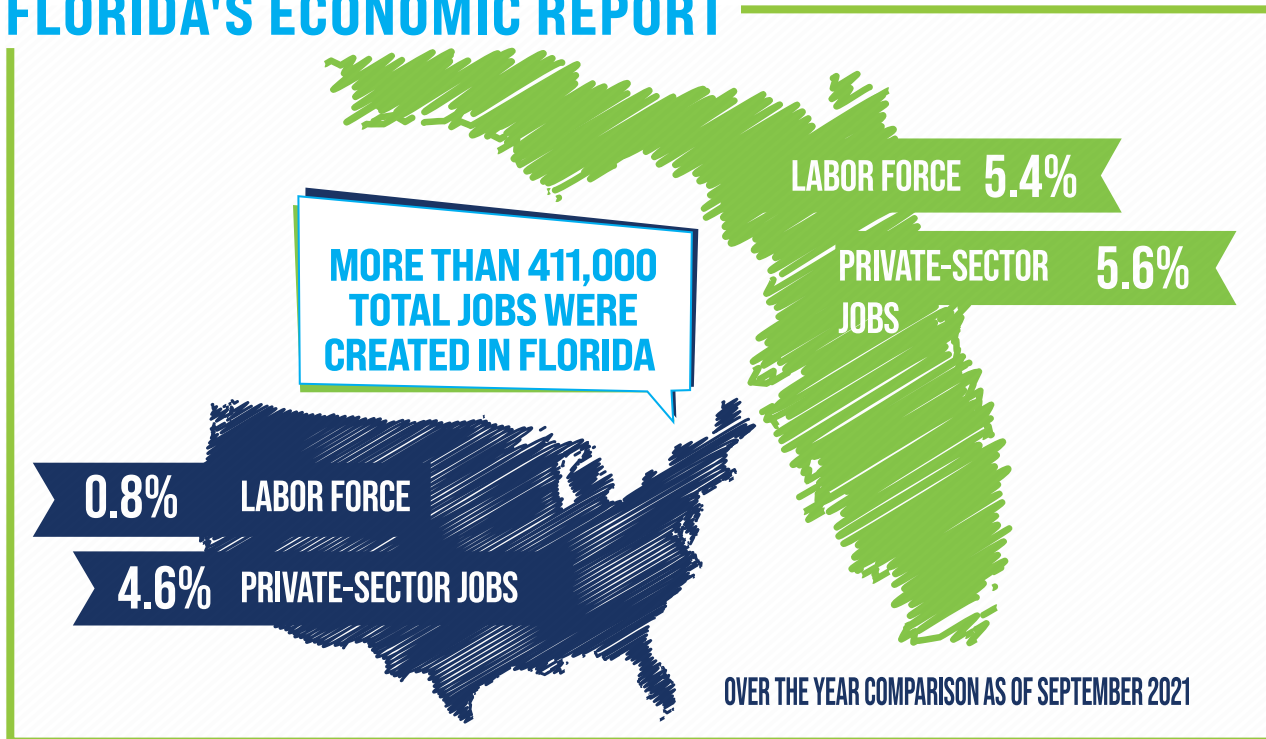
# BUSINESS CLIMATE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Governor DeSantis’ prioritization of enhancing workforce development initiatives, supporting a business friendly environment, and creating a diverse economy has proven to be an important foundation for Florida’s economic recovery. Throughout the last year, Florida’s successful economy has driven the nation’s positive economic activity. Florida has rebounded from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic swiftly. As of September 2021, Florida has experienced 17 consecutive months of job growth and 11 consecutive months of labor force growth.

Florida’s economy accelerated in September 2021, growing at three times the rate compared to the nation. Overall, for the month of September 2021, Florida gained 84,500 total jobs, including nearly 73,000 private-sector jobs, increasing by 5.6% over the year. Florida has experienced this magnitude of monthly private sector job growth on only four other occasions in the past 30 years. In addition, Florida’s labor force has increased, adding 540,000 workers over the year. Florida’s labor force growth represents a 5.4% increase over the year, which is significantly higher than the national over the year rate of 0.8%. In total, Florida has gained more than one million jobs since April 2020.

Governor DeSantis’ directive on making Florida a national leader in workforce training allowed Florida to be among the first in the nation to support economic recovery. In collaboration with its public and private partners, the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) assists the Governor in advancing Florida’s economy by championing the state’s economic development vision as well as administering state and federal programs. DEO strives to break down silos within state government and provide a more comprehensive approach for economic, workforce, and community development throughout the state. DEO works to maintain a favorable environment to recruit businesses and create more jobs, so every Floridian has an opportunity for success.

## FLORIDA'S ECONOMIC REPORT



As part of the Governor’s goal to enhance workforce training and education in the sunshine state, DEO works to fund, develop, and implement workforce training programs to put Floridians on a path to economic sustainability, as well as help create a world-class talent pipeline for current and prospective businesses. DEO administers several programs targeted specifically for our state’s veterans, Floridians living in low-to-moderate income communities, and individuals who have fallen on financial hardships. Many Floridians are looking to find employment in jobs where their skills match the demand from employers. DEO, along with its partners, continues to help Floridians obtain the training and support necessary to find employment, as well as providing investments in communities and creating opportunities for small businesses to access capital.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The vision, goals, and objectives for economic development in Florida are defined in the Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development 2018-2023. In addition, DEO is implementing the recommendations below:

- Continue to focus on prioritizing the administration of Reemployment Assistance efficiently, timely, and effectively while modernizing the system to improve customer experience and mitigate Reemployment Assistance fraud and identity theft.
- Promote employment and provide programs, services, resources, and opportunities for Florida’s job seekers and other Floridians experiencing barriers to economic self-sufficiency.
- Assist Florida’s employers in finding, developing, and retaining qualified workforce talent.
- Distribute disaster recovery and mitigation funds for long-term recovery efforts to assist Florida job seekers, businesses, and communities that were impacted by recent hurricanes.
- Partner with education and business stakeholders to ensure alignment between credentials and the demand from employers.
- Provide technical assistance and work closely with state and federal entities to support rural and urban local governments, economic development representatives, planning councils, and small or minority businesses.
- Improve job opportunities and quality of life in communities by utilizing Competitive Florida Partnership, the Office of Broadband, and other state and federal resources.
- Promote public infrastructure, workforce training, and economic development across the state through the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund.



Workforce and education leaders cut the ribbon on Lockheed Martin’s new Apprenticeship Lab at the College of Central Florida.



# THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY'S PARTNERS

Performance reports included in this report, pursuant to Florida Statutes, include CareerSource Florida, Inc.; Enterprise Florida, Inc.; Florida Sports Foundation; VISIT FLORIDA; Space Florida; and Florida Development Finance Corporation.



Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI) is the principal economic development organization for the state of Florida. Its role is to expand and diversify the state's economy through private-sector job creation. EFI collaborates with DEO and its statewide partners to facilitate private-sector job growth through business recruitment, international trade, capital funding programs to assist small and minority businesses, promotion of sporting events, and support of the state's military bases and personnel.

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

In fiscal year 2020-2021, EFI and its statewide partners established 77 economic development projects representing 10,187 new and retained jobs and more than \$1.4 billion in capital investment. Projects included relocations or expansions from Dun & Bradstreet, The Boeing Company, UPS, Pfizer, The Blackstone Group, and Citigroup to name a few. EFI markets Florida as the premier business location in the U.S., focusing on Florida's workforce, innovation, infrastructure, and pro-business climate. The campaign targets business leaders and site-selection professionals around the world.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE & DEVELOPMENT (IT&D)

EFI's International Trade and Development division provides a variety of programs to help Florida's small and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs) grow through international trade. The division's statewide network of professional trade managers conducted export consultations with 2,025 companies last fiscal year to assess market readiness, select target markets for products or services, provide market research information on channels of distribution in target markets, and introductions to EFI's international offices.

While overseas travel was limited, virtual versions of seven major trade shows gave companies the opportunity to showcase their products and services overseas, and several webinars were conducted to keep them informed about timely trade-related topics. In total, Florida companies reported more than \$700 million in actual and expected export sales due to IT&D's export development programs. Through the state's Export Diversification and Expansion program, more than \$500,000 in trade grants were awarded to more than 260 companies to participate in virtual trade shows and business matchmaking along with export marketing plans and international website development. These businesses continue to grow and produce jobs.

IT&D's International Office network and foreign direct investment (FDI) team conducted 471 consultations with Florida companies interested in doing business overseas and 1,547 consultations with foreign companies interested in learning more about investing in Florida. Thirty-eight FDI projects with \$48.2 million in total capital investment were established due to their efforts.



Enterprise Florida’s Business Development team along with its regional partners at the Miami-Dade Beacon Council successfully recruited the technology arm of the iconic financial services firm Blackstone to Miami. The company is diversifying its corporate footprint by creating a technology hub that will employ 215 information technology positions at an average annual salary of \$200,000. The positions are in cutting edge roles that will implement the company’s enterprise technology, data architecture, cyber operations, and client and firm online platforms. Over the next three years, the company will invest over \$50 million in the project.

Miami is a great fit for Blackstone according to John Stecher, Chief Technology Officer. Stecher said, “Miami is an incredibly vibrant market, with top talent from best-in-class technology programs and a large technology footprint. We are thrilled to be expanding and diversifying our in-house technology capabilities here as Blackstone continues to grow. South Florida is the perfect location for Blackstone’s Technology & Innovations team to launch a hub and fill new roles to accommodate ever-increasing demand for quality technology support.”



Florida International Trade Expo – Virtual Lobby



Florida International Trade Expo – Enterprise Florida Virtual Booth



The Florida Sports Foundation (FSF), a division of EFI, assists Florida communities with securing, hosting, and retaining sporting events and sports-related businesses that generate significant economic impact and sports tourism for the state through grant programs, legislative initiatives, and industry partner services, recognition, and development.

During fiscal year 2020-21, FSF awarded 171 sporting event grants total of \$2,576,269 in awards to 34 industry partners throughout Florida. The grants awarded this fiscal year are projected to bring 865,633 out-of-state visitors and a projected total impact over \$624 million to the state of Florida. During this fiscal year, FSF paid out a total of 49 grants for a total of \$2,273,646 which includes any carry over grants from the prior fiscal year. The grants paid out this fiscal year brought 272,987 visitors and an economic impact over \$490 million to the state.





## ENTERPRISE FLORIDA, INC. PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR STATE FISCAL YEAR 2020-21

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY 2020-2021 ACTUALS	PERFORMANCE STANDARDS
<b>▶ BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT – PROPOSED JOB CREATION</b>		
*Total number of proposed jobs to be created by businesses assisted by EFI	10,187	13,000
In rural communities	100	300
By international businesses	2,373	700
With incentives	6,116	3,000
<b>▶ INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b>		
Number of Florida based businesses assisted by EFI for international trade	2,025	2,250
Number of companies with export sales attributable to activities conducted by EFI	834	260
Amount (US dollar value in millions) of projected export sales attributable to the activities conducted by EFI	\$713 million	\$625 million
<b>▶ MARKETING FLORIDA</b>		
Web traffic to EFI's website (overall traffic in visits)	611,404	350,000
Positive media hits	719	550
Total social media channel followers	49,193	30,000
Total media impressions (print, digital, broadcast, out of home)	209,165,592	65,000,000
<b>▶ MINORITY AND/OR SMALL BUSINESS, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CAPITAL</b>		
**Number of businesses that received financial assistance	23	6
<b>▶ GENERAL</b>		
Satisfaction of businesses served with investment or trade assistance provided by EFI	97%	95%
Response rate for Business Development/International Trade Development customer satisfaction survey	32%	25%
<b>▶ FLORIDA SPORTS FOUNDATION</b>		
Economic contributions to communities as a result of hosting Florida's Senior State ***Games and Sunshine State Games Championships	\$7,000,000	\$8,219,896
Number of participants (athletes and families) competing in and attending Florida's ***Senior State Games and Sunshine State Games Championships	40,000	25,296*
Economic contributions from Florida Sports Foundation sponsored sporting event grants	\$200,000,000	\$624,360,941
Number of attendees at the sponsored grant events	300,000	865,633

\*The job creation numbers comprise duplicated accounts and represent selected subsets of this total. They will not add up to this total.

\*\*The number given represents the number of individual transactions throughout the fiscal year.

\*\*\*Q1 and Q2 events postponed due to COVID-19 and rescheduled for fiscal year 2021-22.

More information about EFI may be found at [EnterpriseFlorida.com](https://EnterpriseFlorida.com). A copy of the most recent EFI annual report may be found at [EnterpriseFlorida.com/About/Transparency/](https://EnterpriseFlorida.com/About/Transparency/).





Florida Development Finance Corporation (FD FC) was specifically formed pursuant to Florida Statutes, Chapter 288 Part IX to facilitate economic development in Florida by working in partnership with the Florida financial services industry and local development organizations, to create access to competitive sources of finance for creditworthy small manufacturers and other firms, critical to the economic base of Florida.

FD FC is a state authorized issuer of industrial revenue bonds. FD FC issues bonds in counties throughout Florida through interlocal agreements and supports economic development by assisting for-profit and not-for-profit businesses with access to capital for project financing. The primary mechanism for accessing the capital markets is tax-exempt and taxable bonds.

FD FC's revenues are exclusively generated by fees charged for issuance of bonds, and the volume of bond issuance can be directly impacted by general economic and perception of policies for conduit issuance by potential borrowers and their finance team. The capital market has functioned in an artificially low interest-rate environment for an extended period of time since the height of the pandemic.

FD FC facilitated the authorization and issuance of \$1,964,207,500 in 22 new money bonds for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. The types of borrowers served by the FD FC bond process were 12 charter schools, 1 private school, 2 transportation facilities, 2 industrial development manufacturing facilities, 3 senior living facilities, and 2 solid waste disposal facilities. In all, FD FC received conduit debt application and issuance fees totaling \$1,843,314.





CareerSource Florida, Inc. is the Governor’s principal workforce policy organization, directed by a board of business and government leaders charged with guiding workforce development for the state of Florida. Created as a not-for-profit corporation, the state workforce investment board provides oversight and policy direction for talent development programs administered by DEO, Florida’s 24 local workforce development boards, and more than 100 career centers across the state.

DEO partners with CareerSource Florida and the state’s local workforce development boards to strengthen Florida’s business climate by supporting employers and helping Floridians gain employment, remain employed, and advance in their careers. Across the state, 53,703 businesses were served by their local workforce development board last year, receiving help with recruiting, hiring, and training new and existing employees.



**Open House** – Chef Tamara Lutz shares how she overcame a troubled past, got a great job and regained custody of her child after employment services through CareerSource Capital Region at an open house to showcase assistance available through the CareerSource Florida network.



**Open House** – Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Secretary Dane Eagle, CareerSource Florida President and CEO Michelle Dennard, and other leaders highlight career and business services available during an open house at CareerSource Capital Region.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

## CAREERSOURCE FLORIDA PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR STATE FISCAL YEAR 2020-21

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY 2020-21 ACTUALS
<b>INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING (IWT) GRANT PROGRAM</b>	
Number of projected IWT trainees	4,534
Number of IWT grants awarded to businesses	108
<b>QUICK RESPONSE TRAINING (QRT) GRANT PROGRAM</b>	
Number of projected QRT trainees	3,051
Number of QRT grants awarded to businesses	14

More information about CareerSource Florida may be found at [CareerSourceFlorida.com](https://www.careersourceflorida.com).

A copy of CareerSource Florida’s most recent state annual report may be found at [CareerSourceFlorida.com/About-Us/Reports-and-Publication/](https://www.careersourceflorida.com/About-Us/Reports-and-Publication/).





VISIT FLORIDA facilitates the tourism industry’s participation in travel, trade, and consumer shows, as well as media campaigns to the top global visitor markets. VISIT FLORIDA also works closely with travel agents, tour operators, meeting and event planners, and is responsible for operating Florida’s four official Welcome Centers. According to surveys conducted during fiscal year 2020-21, 63.6 percent of visitors were influenced by VISIT FLORIDA marketing efforts.

In 2020, Florida welcomed 79.3 million visitors, a major decrease from the prior year resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 75.2 million were out-of-state domestic travelers and 4.1 million were international travelers. On any given day in 2020, Florida had 1.5 million visitors.

In the latest economic impact study conducted on 2019 visitation, visitors added \$96.5 billion to Florida’s GDP. Their spending contributed to \$12.8 billion in state and local tax revenue and supported over 1.6 million jobs across the state. For every \$1 the state invests in VISIT FLORIDA, \$3.27 in tax revenue is generated.

The pandemic hit early in 2020, decimating Florida's tourism economy. Florida led the country in re-opening, empowering VISIT FLORIDA to support Florida’s tourism businesses earlier than our competitors. Florida's tourism recovery has been swift and decisive, and the results are in: Florida welcomed 31.4 million travelers in the second calendar quarter of 2021, a 216 percent increase over the same quarter in 2020 and, notably, even a 6 percent increase over the same quarter in 2019, in itself a record-breaking year for Florida tourism.

### VISIT FLORIDA PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR STATE FISCAL YEAR 2020-21

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY 2020-21 ACTUALS	PERFORMANCE STANDARDS
Annual percentage of domestic visitors to Florida influenced by VISIT FLORIDA's primary marketing programs	63.60%	25%
Industry rating of VISIT FLORIDA's performance in promoting tourism to Florida	8.1/10	7.0/10
Annual share of domestic vacation trips	17.3%	10%
Annual share of international visitor spending	24.5%	10%
Maintain annual market share in traditional feeder markets	18.8%	10%
Growth in annual market share in emerging markets	17.6%	0%
Number of strategies in the Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development 2018-2023 being implemented by VISIT FLORIDA	4	4
VISIT FLORIDA MARKETING ACTIVITIES		
Total number of individual businesses actively participating in VISIT FLORIDA marketing activities	13,757	12,000
Total number of individual businesses, located in RACEC-designated communities, actively participating in VISIT FLORIDA marketing activities, and the percentage coverage of the total RACEC-designated communities.	890/100%	600/90%

\*Unless otherwise noted all information provided is the most recent data available for the report period.

More information about VISIT FLORIDA may be found at: [VisitFlorida.org](https://www.visitflorida.org). A copy of VISIT FLORIDA's Annual Report may be found at: [VisitFlorida.org/About-Us/What-We-Do/Annual-Reports](https://www.visitflorida.org/About-Us/What-We-Do/Annual-Reports).





Space Florida was established in 2006 and is responsible for accelerating the growth of space-related industries through targeted space business retention, expansion, and diversification efforts. Space Florida also provides leadership in innovative educational, research, development, workforce development programs, and space-related infrastructure development projects.

Florida’s aerospace-related entities have shown continued growth in sales since 2010 and are expected to capture more growth in aerospace and aviation industries. This year, Florida is succeeding in an ever-changing space and aerospace market by seeking out new business in historically non-traditional places. In the past year, Space Florida recruited, retained, and expanded 15 space and aerospace-related companies along with more than 5,220 jobs.

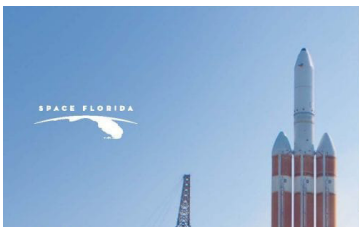
Space Florida’s business development opportunities continue to grow the state’s commercial space industry and other aerospace-related sectors through various innovation accelerators, financing capabilities, and spaceport improvement program activities.

### SPACE FLORIDA PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR STATE FISCAL YEAR 2020-21

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY 2020-21 ACTUALS	PERFORMANCE STANDARDS
Annual number of jobs created, recruited, and or retained	5,220	1,000
Annual number of companies recruited, retained, and/or expanded	15	15
Annual number and amount of funding for research projects, partnerships and grants supported	30/\$2M	30/\$2M
Number of strategies in the <i>Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development 2018-2023</i>	15	15

More information about Space Florida may be found at [SpaceFlorida.gov](http://SpaceFlorida.gov).  
 A copy of Space Florida’s annual report may be found at [SpaceFlorida.gov/About/Annual-Reports](http://SpaceFlorida.gov/About/Annual-Reports).

AEROSPACE DEVELOPMENT





Lake Nona Town Center, captured in 2018 (Credit: Lake Nona)

SIMCOM International, Inc. announced on August 4, 2020, that it would be expanding and building a new worldwide headquarters in Orlando. The company currently operates two learning centers in Orlando, invests \$109 million in a new headquarters and training facility, and plans to create more than 50 new high-wage jobs over the next two years.

January 15, 2021, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Office of Commercial Space Transportation (AST) issued Space Florida a Reentry Site Operator License (RSOL) for operations at the Cape Canaveral Spaceport Shuttle Landing Facility (SLF).



Aerial view of Launch and Landing Facility (LLF). (Credit: Space Florida)

Cape Canaveral Air Force Station (Credit: SpaceX)



A Falcon 9 rocket climbs away from pad 40 Sunday, August 31, 2020 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. The return of polar and sun-synchronous orbit launch capability to the Cape Canaveral Spaceport presents an opportunity for launch providers to satisfy almost any orbital launch requirement from Florida, as well as the ability to consolidate operations to a single site.

Space Florida entered into a Use Agreement for Sierra Nevada Corporation's (SNC) use of Space Florida's Launch and Landing Facility (LLF) for reentries of SNC's Dream Chaser® spaceplane in support of NASA's Commercial Resupply Services (CRS)-2 contract. The agreement will make LLF the first landing site for Dream Chaser® when it returns from its first NASA mission in late 2022.



Space Florida President & CEO Frank DiBello speaks at the Sierra Nevada Corporation announcement at the Launch and Landing Facility.



# REQUIRED REPORTS

## BLACK BUSINESS LOAN PROGRAM

In 2007, the Florida Legislature enacted the Florida Black Business Investment Act, establishing the Black Business Loan Program (F.S. 288.7102). The program provides capital to eligible black business enterprises that are not able to through conventional lending institutions, but could otherwise compete successfully in the private sector. Eligible recipients may qualify to receive loans and loan guarantees. Technical assistance is also provided to black enterprises that are seeking assistance with starting a business. Loan administrators for the 2020-2021 State Fiscal Year include: Miami Bayside Foundation, FAMU Federal Credit Union, and The Community Fund of North Miami Dade.

### BLACK BUSINESS LOAN PROGRAM PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR STATE FISCAL YEAR 2020-21

FISCAL YEAR	LOAN ADMINISTRATORS	ANNUAL APPROPRIATION	NUMBER OF LOANS/ LOAN GUARANTEES	AMOUNT OF LOANS/ LOAN GUARANTEES
2020-2021	3	\$2,225,000	30	\$1,575,500
2019-2020	2	\$2,225,000	18	\$809,700
2018-2019	2	\$2,225,000	17	\$990,011
2017-2018	2	\$2,225,000	25	\$1,006,288
2016-2017	2	\$2,225,000	56	\$1,808,058
2015-2016	2	\$2,225,000	66	\$2,663,305
2014-2015	1	\$2,224,999.98	12	\$153,631

More information about the Black Business Loan Program may be found at [FloridaJobs.org/BBLP](https://FloridaJobs.org/BBLP).





The Florida Unique Abilities Partner Program was created by the Florida Legislature to recognize businesses and organizations that employ individuals with disabilities, contribute to local or national disability organizations, or contribute to the establishment of a program that advances the independence of individuals with disabilities.

The Florida Unique Abilities Partner Program was designed to raise awareness of the economic and social benefits of employing individuals with unique abilities. Employing people with unique abilities is a direct and cost-effective means to assist them in achieving independence and fulfillment. When a company hires someone with a disability, the employee gains confidence, acceptance, and financial security.

During calendar year 2020, DEO received fewer applications than previous years, but re-certified many unique abilities partners.

## FLORIDA UNIQUE ABILITIES PARTNER PROGRAM PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2021

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	2020 ACTUALS
<b>▶ BUSINESS DESIGNATION APPLICATIONS, AWARDS AND ANNUAL CERTIFICATIONS</b>	
Number of applications and nominations received	12
Number of designations awarded	9
Number of annual certifications	171
<b>▶ PROGRAM TOTALS</b>	
Number of applications and nominations received to date	281
Number of current Unique Abilities Partners	184
Number of Employers that are listed in the Employ Florida system as Unique Abilities Partners	15

More information about the Unique Abilities Partner Program may be found at [FloridaUniqueAbilities.org](https://FloridaUniqueAbilities.org).





## RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

The Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) is an effort involving more than 17 state and regional entities that help rural communities improve their economies, specifically in terms of personal income, job creation, average wages, and a strong tax base. Additionally, REDI works with local governments, community-based organizations, and private organizations that have an interest in the growth and development of these communities to balance environmental and growth management issues with local needs.

The Governor may designate up to three rural areas of opportunity as recommended by REDI through executive order, which will establish these areas as priority assignments for REDI. This also allows the Governor, acting through REDI, to waive criteria, requirements, or similar provisions of any economic development incentive. REDI agencies and other REDI organizations may waive or reduce program match requirements to provide preferential awards or provide other financial and technical assistance. More information about the Rural Economic Development Initiative may be found at [FloridaJobs.org/RuralEconomicDevelopmentInitiative](https://FloridaJobs.org/RuralEconomicDevelopmentInitiative).

### REDI is a large-scale collaborative effort of the following agencies and organizations:

- Agency for Health Care Administration
- CareerSource Florida, Inc.
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Florida Department of Children and Families
- Florida Department of Corrections
- Florida Department of Education
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Florida Department of Health
- Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
- Florida Department of State
- Florida Department of Transportation
- Enterprise Florida, Inc.
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Florida Regional Planning Councils Association
- Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences
- VISIT FLORIDA
- Water Management Districts (Northwest Florida, Suwannee River, St. Johns River, Southwest Florida and South Florida)

Members of REDI participated in Competitive Florida Partnership program asset mapping exercises, bringing program expertise across the state and federal spectrum directly into the communities. Local leaders were able to have one-on-one conversations with REDI's representatives and establish new relationships. Over the year, REDI also consulted with rural communities on a wide range of requests for assistance including water and wastewater improvements, road projects, economic resilience training and resources, and public safety and emergency response facilities. One such example is that the City of Lake Butler in Union County has been awarded the funding to build a long-needed new fire station. The county celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2021.



The Office of Community Partnership conducts a Competitive Florida Partnership program asset mapping in Wakulla, FL.



REDI members speak with local business owners about economic development priorities in Panacea, FL.

## RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE RURAL AREA OF OPPORTUNITY (RAO) AND RURAL COUNTY STATISTICS

The total number of awards, waivers, funding, and technical assistance events, and the estimated dollar value of grants and waivers provided by REDI agencies to rural communities and Rural Areas of Opportunity (RAO) during the reporting period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021.

COUNTY	AMOUNT OR VALUE	JOBS CREATED OR RETAINED	PREFERENTIAL AWARDS	WAIVERS GRANTED	TOTAL # OF FUNDING EVENTS AND/OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
<b>▾ NORTH WEST RAO</b>					
Calhoun	\$ 11,960,389	0	36	7	36
Franklin	\$ 21,331,819	5	62	19	62
Gadsden	\$ 20,555,088	9	70	23	70
Gulf	\$ 16,017,598	0	46	17	46
Holmes	\$ 15,461,840	1	50	16	50
Jackson	\$ 43,445,216	106	96	23	96
Liberty	\$ 8,969,128	0	39	11	39
Wakulla	\$ 14,315,610	0	46	15	46
Walton	\$ 34,602,021	0	61	23	61
Washington	\$ 24,894,940	4	62	13	62
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 211,553,649</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>568</b>
<b>▾ NORTH CENTRAL RAO</b>					
Baker	\$ 12,779,749	0	31	5	31
Bradford	\$ 21,167,999	0	39	8	39
Columbia	\$ 28,554,852	73	65	11	65
Dixie	\$ 15,346,736	0	34	10	34
Gilchrist	\$ 27,154,284	34	38	8	38
Hamilton	\$ 10,691,235	0	41	5	41
Jefferson	\$ 5,777,232	8	36	9	36
Lafayette	\$ 5,050,442	0	19	5	19
Levy	\$ 20,629,143	0	54	12	54
Madison	\$ 17,654,016	17	62	22	62
Putnam	\$ 45,430,357	0	68	29	68
Suwannee	\$ 17,201,268	54	59	10	59
Taylor	\$ 11,937,429	0	41	7	41
Union	\$ 7,418,771	0	29	8	29
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 246,793,513</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>616</b>
<b>▾ SOUTH CENTRAL RAO</b>					
Collier	\$ 1,373,534	2	5	0	5
DeSoto	\$ 11,618,176	0	48	12	48
Glades	\$ 11,325,505	0	38	12	38
Hardee	\$ 9,022,590	1	47	10	47
Hendry	\$ 21,607,991	1	59	13	59
Highlands	\$ 29,576,458	7	138	58	138
Okeechobee	\$ 29,162,477	3	67	19	67
Palm Beach	\$ 23,592,466	2	25	3	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 137,279,196</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>427</b>
<b>▾ NON-RAO RURAL COUNTIES &amp; COMMUNITIES</b>					
Flagler	\$ 36,243,533	0	48	14	48
Nassau	\$ 17,391,516	0	39	13	39
Walton	\$ 10,654,791	0	22	9	22
Rural Communities	\$ 47,689,736	3	127	42	127
Multi County	\$ 5,094,538	0	28	1	28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 117,074,114</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>264</b>
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 712,700,472</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>1,875</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>1,875</b>

\*The job creation and retention figures reported by REDI agencies can vary from fiscal year to year due to various reasons including single-year grant allocations, temporary jobs, low rates of unemployment and high workforce participation.





