



POLK COUNTY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

FY 2026/27
AUGUST 2026



CENTRAL FLORIDA
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Polk County's Economic Partnership

FLORIDA *within* REACH



WHO
WE ARE

The Central Florida Development Council (CFDC) is **Polk County's economic development partnership** responsible for attracting new businesses to Polk County and helping existing businesses expand. We focus on domestic and international business recruitment and expansion, business advocacy, facilitating collaborative partnerships and advancing strategic initiatives in Central Florida's Polk County.

MISSION

Grow an economy based on high-skill, high-wage sustainable businesses.

VISION

The vision of the CFDC is to develop an economic environment that attracts and retains industry-diverse businesses with higher-paying careers and educates and retains qualified talent to align with targeted industry workforce needs.

PRIVATE-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

Investor members are essential to advancing Polk County's economic prosperity and ensuring Polk remains a premier place to live, work and do business. Their investment reflects a commitment to a stronger, more prosperous and diverse economy and provides the private-sector partnership needed to turn economic development priorities into action.

Through their investment and engagement, CFDC investors help build Polk's sectors of strength, influence economic and job growth, connect businesses and industries, and champion initiatives that strengthen the region's competitive position. Investors also contribute their expertise and leadership through committees, industry engagement and networking opportunities—helping shape and execute the CFDC's mission and strategy.

Together, public and private partners create the momentum, resources and leadership necessary to grow a resilient economy and expand opportunity across Polk County.

TARGET SECTORS



ADVANCED +
TECH ENABLED
MANUFACTURING



AGTECH



AVIATION, AERO-
SPACE & DEFENSE



CORPORATE &
PROFESSIONAL
SERVICES



CREATIVE
INDUSTRIES &
TOURISM



LIFE SCIENCES
& HEALTHCARE
ADVANCEMENT



LOGISTICS,
SUPPLY CHAIN &
E-COMMERCE



RESEARCH,
INNOVATION &
TECHNOLOGY





\$500 M

CAPITAL INVESTMENT



\$63,977

PROJECT WAGE ≥ 115%
OF AVG. ANNUAL WAGE



1,000

NEW JOBS

Strategic
Initiatives:



INFLUENCES



Greater Ad Valorem
Tax Received by
the County

COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL
TANGIBLE TAXES COLLECTED
\$78.2M (TAXES ON IMPROVEMENTS)
38% GROWTH SINCE 2020
SOURCE: POLK COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER, JULY 2024

Higher Average
Annual Wage of
County Residents

AVG. ANNUAL WAGE
↑ TO **\$55,633**
18% GROWTH SINCE 2021
SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPT. OF COMMERCE, JAN. 2026

Additional
Businesses Operating
within the County

↑ **1.62%** BUSINESSES IN
POLK COUNTY (2024)
SOURCE: POLK COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR



Promote Polk County as Florida's Best Place for Business

To promote Polk County as Florida's best place for business both domestically and internationally, CFDC's strategy for business recruitment includes proactive business attraction, retention and expansion outreach. Tactics within this focus area were developed in order to achieve increased job creation and capital investment from new and existing businesses.

The plan is a multi-level approach to business attraction, retention and expansion. The plan calls for expanding the dialogue with businesses, developing direct business recruitment strategies and utilizing targeted group outreach. Site selectors are an example of a targeted group as they connect with many companies seeking new locations and facilities.

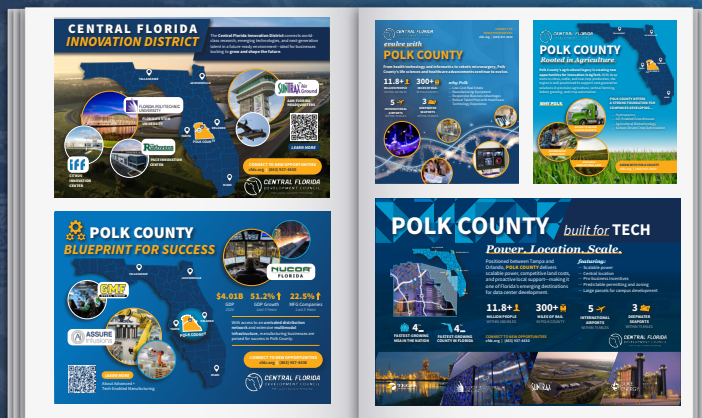
Marketing and Communications

Building a consistent brand and showcasing Polk as **Florida's Best Place for Business** is the messaging foundation for all of our marketing and communication efforts.

Branding Polk as "Florida Within Reach" at trade shows and conferences offers economic development opportunities to build impactful relationships with new businesses and site selectors.

We seek to maximize our possibilities in each trade show as it is a cost-effective way of branding Polk County, cultivating new prospects, developing new relationships, extending current relationships and moving projects forward. With each trade show, where and when possible, we perform direct and indirect marketing that incorporates industry knowledge specific to the group, client and consultant visits, as well as competitive surveillance and intelligence gathering.

Featured Publications:



SOUTHERN
BUSINESS & DEVELOPMENT

CENTRAL FLORIDA
media
GROUP

EXPANSION
SOLUTIONS
ESM
MAGAZINE

Florida Trend
FLORIDA'S BUSINESS AUTHORITY

SITSELECTION

TAMPA BAY
BUSINESS JOURNAL

Viva!
POLK



Facilitate Collaborative Partnerships

Collaborative partnerships are necessary for all of our initiatives to be successful. Polk County is fortunate to have experts in a variety of groups, both in the public and private sectors. Polk's economic prosperity demands the collaboration of key economic development partners throughout the county, region, state and the globe.



Community Stakeholder Committee

The **Community Stakeholder Committee** meets regularly to discuss relevant economic development topics for the competitiveness of the county. Members of the committee are comprised of economic development and municipal leaders from throughout Polk County.

Aviation Committee

The **Aviation Committee** meets regularly in conjunction with the Central Florida Aerospace Education Consortium to discuss important industry needs and aviation development opportunities for Polk County. Members of the committee include leaders from all Polk County airports, aviation industry companies and educators within the aviation sector.



Advocate for Key Business Issues

To advocate for key business issues affecting all businesses throughout Polk County.

CFDC & Polk Vision Talent Pipeline Committee

Polk County's long-term economic position is heavily dependent on the County's ability to develop the talent pipeline and to find solutions to retain talent. The CFDC and Polk Vision partner to address critical education priorities for Polk County. Through aligning efforts, the **Talent Pipeline Committee** meets monthly to unite private industry, K-12 school administration, the school board, local college and university administration, and educational support organizations.

Competitiveness and Advocacy Committee (C&A)

In a growing competitive market, Polk County must continually evaluate its offerings, programs and legislative conditions as compared with other communities. Examining topics and issues that may impact the competitiveness of Polk's target industry sectors is a collaborative process among a cross-section of business and industry experts. The **C&A Committee** meets regularly to evaluate topics and issues that may impact the competitiveness of our target industry sectors.

Investor Relations Committee

The CFDC continues to grow private investors and investment at all levels through active engagement and events. Private sector involvement and investment is crucial to helping CFDC achieve its mission of growing a flourishing economy based on high-skill, high-wage sustainable businesses. In addition to contributing toward the growth and success of Polk's economic development, investment in the CFDC reflects a company's commitment to making Polk a premier place to do business. Investors are adding their voices to the conversation through committee participation, meetings and events. The **Investor Relations Committee** meets regularly to evaluate investor engagement and involvement.

COUNTY PARTNER



VISIONARY



INNOVATOR



CONNECTOR



MUNICIPAL PARTNERS





Advance Strategic Initiatives



Strategic Initiative #1

Expand Polk County's ecosystem to support the growth of technology enabled employment.

Goal: At least 60% of new jobs and capital investment created will be within strategic technology industries

Objectives:

- Actively generate new-to-market technology leads
- Foster narrative that Polk County is the market for tech employment
- Build ecosystem for existing industry success and technology adoption
- Promote Polk County as preferred location for digital infrastructure projects



Strategic Initiative #2

Elevate Polk County's position within the state and nation for research and innovation-driven projects.

Goal: Attract research-oriented business & industry to Polk County

Objectives:

- Foster the advancement of the Central Florida Innovation District
- Actively engage with SunTrax Air and Ground
- Facilitate industry and higher education collaboration



Strategic Initiative #3

Advance Polk County's water, road and transportation infrastructure to support future business growth.

Goal:

- Strengthen Polk County's inventory of investment-ready industrial sites
- Support the pursuit of enhanced roadway infrastructure investment
- Advocate for the expansion of Polk County's water infrastructure to areas well-positioned for industrial development
- Advocate for a high-speed rail stop in Polk County

Objectives:

- Leverage findings of InvestReady Polk to enhance industrial infrastructure development
- Secure additional roadway infrastructure funding
- Promote advanced air mobility technology opportunities
- Support water resource partnerships and the development of alternative water supplies