

Annual State of Florida Report  
Marion County

- A. Ocala Metro Chamber & Economic Partnership  
Kevin T. Sheilley, CCE, President/CEO
- B. Marion County Government  
Mounir Bouyounes, County Administrator
- C. Marion County Annual Contract Amount: General Services Award: NTE \$300,000.00
- D. Total of all funds received from other governmental bodies for the Year: \$190,000.00
- E. Funds received from private investors this Year: \$4,000,000
- F. Administrative Cost for the CEP for the Year: \$2,600,000
- G. Number and names of businesses assisted by the CEP and the type of assistance provided (The CEP assisted approximately 200 existing businesses, 300 entrepreneurs, and worked with 40 active projects in 2024. The following is a list of some of the more active projects from the year).
  - BuildersFirst— technical assistance, site selection, workforce
  - Flower—site selection, technical assistance
  - AYR Wellness—technical assistance, workforce
  - MUV—site selection, technical assistance
  - InSite Realty—site selection, technical assistance
- H. Total capital investment of businesses who have been assisted by the CEP: \$469 million. The following is a list of some of the larger projects from the year.
  - BuildersFirst— \$3 million
  - Flower—\$100 million
  - AYR Wellness—\$43 million
  - MUV—\$80 million
  - InSite Realty—\$12 million
- I. Total foreign investment of businesses who have been assisted by the CEP: \$0
- J. Number of new direct jobs resulting from a business being moved into Marion County or expanding within the County due to assistance provided by the CEP: 1,710 (The following is a list of some of the larger projects from the year).



## MOVING FORWARD

BuildersFirst— 100  
Flower—300  
AYR Wellness—150  
MUV—350

K. Number of these jobs retained and the length of the job retention: NA

L. The type of incentives and the amount of incentives that the CEP has successfully assisted businesses in receiving:

No meaningful incentive packages were awarded this year

M. Any additional information that would show an economic benefit to Marion County Government as a result of the CEP.

Business Attraction efforts continued the strong growth of the last few years. The CEP maintains a strong pipeline of leads and projects going into 2025 and anticipates a number of announcements in Q1 2025. Dollar Tree recently opened the 1 million square foot expansion of their distribution center in that same park and begin adding approximately 400 additional employees. ADS will be taking over a long vacant building in the Baseline Commerce Park with another significant employer expected to locate in that area in Q1. Job creation centers are growing four distinct areas and will over the next few years create hundreds of jobs closer to residential centers decreasing both commutes and traffic.

The Business Retention efforts resulted in more than 200 business visits during the year. As a result of these visits, approximately 80 business referrals were made, and company expansions will create half the announced jobs total and result in \$200+ million in capital investment.

The CEP provides business creation/entrepreneurial activities for the County. The incubator operates three facilities and was running at 90% occupancy. Four residents graduated from the program during the year and remain operational in the community. Additionally, the program provided technical assistance to more than 300 entrepreneurs. A neighborhood incubator in Silver Springs Shores opened in Q2 and the new Ocala Metro Catalyst Fund (a CDFI) began making nano loans to support entrepreneurs.

