

A RISING TIDE

GREATER GAINESVILLE CHAMBER

2019 **State** Priorities



GREATER GAINESVILLE CHAMBER

proactive. collaborative. regional. **POLICY.**



POLICY IS A FORERUNNER TO OPPORTUNITY

Greater Gainesville is poised to see a new era of opportunity for all people from East to West, academia to entrepreneur, cradle to career and beyond.

The Greater Gainesville region's unique assets - which include a Top-10 university, No. 1 community college, highly educated population, world-class healthcare system, unmatched natural beauty and big-city cultural amenities - coupled with our central location position us for global competitiveness.

Proactively, collaboratively and regionally, we can prepare for success by taking a deliberate approach to support policies that leverage our assets and address our challenges in a way that honors the spirit of our region and stays true to who we are.

It was in the spirit of moving the region forward, in a Greater Gainesville way, that the Chamber reached out to our members and key partners across the community to craft our 2019 agenda. The priorities included herein are the answers we received when we asked them a simple question: "How can we help you?"

Those conversations underscored that our region is in a true state of positive transformation. And in truth, the Chamber is also in transformation in leadership, focus and approach.

The Chamber is committed to shaping a story in 2019 - its 95th year of existence - of a rising tide capable of lifting all "boats" in Greater Gainesville. To make meaningful progress, this tide must include economic growth and opportunity, local business success, environmental stewardship and education that prepares students for diverse career opportunities across a wide spectrum of industry needs. Policy is central to laying the groundwork for success in all of these areas. This state-level, policy-focused chapter of our story outlines the priorities we believe will help to keep the Greater Gainesville region's transformation going strong.

2019 STATE PRIORITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INNOVATION

- Support full \$85 million funding for the Florida Job Growth Fund & full funding for Enterprise Florida
- Support dedicated use of Sadowski Trust funds for affordable and workforce housing solutions
- Support opportunities to leverage Federal Opportunity Zones
- Support efforts to increase market certainty in relation to autonomous vehicles
- Support solutions that address the unique needs of designated rural communities & municipalities operating in urban-designated Alachua County

EDUCATION

- Support the University of Florida's goals to recruit and retain researchers and teachers, and to become a Top-5 public university
- Support Santa Fe College's goals to expand the downtown Blount Center
- Support local flexibility and increasing recurring operational funds for the School Board of Alachua County to implement local safe school initiatives and to hire at least one law enforcement officer or school safety officer at each school

TALENT DEVELOPMENT

- Support efforts to increase awareness of, and access to, career and technical education programs in key and/or critical industries such as healthcare; manufacturing; life sciences; information technology; logistics & supply chain; building, construction & engineering; agricultural sciences & technology; and others
- Support funding for workforce training programs that offer businesses the opportunity to provide new or existing employees with flexible, customized training

TRANSPORTATION & SAFETY

- Support transportation funding to sustain road capacity and safety for pedestrians, as well as operators of motor vehicles and alternate forms of transportation

REAL ESTATE & DEVELOPMENT

- Support full funding of state and local government housing trust funds to support affordable housing projects

HEALTHCARE

- Support healthcare reimbursement that acknowledges special roles that safety net hospitals play in providing care to Floridians
- Support healthcare providers' ability to expand or make changes to existing capacity based on market needs

APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS

- State Rd. 26 modifications & improvements - \$4.3 million
- City of Newberry Wastewater pumping station & master lift station - \$1.4 million
- City of Hawthorne downtown water main replacement Phase III - \$300,000
- Newnan's Lake Improvement Initiative Phase III - \$470,000
- Eco Industrial Park - \$3.5 million request - \$4.2 million match
- Alachua County Agri-technical Center - \$1 million request with \$9 million local match

A RISING TIDE LIFTS ALL BOATS

In the last decade, the Greater Gainesville Chamber has announced nearly **3,000** jobs & **\$200M** in new capital investment.

Two nationally-ranked health centers leading in more than **100** specialty and sub-specialty areas employ over **24,000** people in the Greater Gainesville region.

Santa Fe College's **\$36.4M** Blount Center will create jobs & investment in an area where it is most needed.

CareerSource North Central Florida has brought **\$31M** in direct federal funding to our region's economy since 2011.

UF ranks **No. 8** in the U.S. & raised **\$837M** for research in 2018. Since 2017, UF has hired **230** new faculty members.

One-tenth of **\$85M** in Florida Job Growth Grant funds were awarded in Alachua County in 2018-2019.

Full Sadowski Trust funding would provide nearly **\$3.2M** for affordable housing in Alachua County.

More than **57%** of Alachua County Citizens age 25 and older hold only a high-school diploma or less. More career & technical education opportunities would widen the path to higher wages for the **23%** of Alachua County citizens who live in poverty.