

## 2025 Legislative Priorities

We are proud to support priorities that are important to our CEP members and help create a business-friendly climate for our local community and state.

### Workforce Education

According to the U.S. Census, Ocala is the fourth fastest-growing metro area in Florida (2024). The Ocala Metro CEP supports workforce education projects that will help our community with job retention and create more jobs as our community grows.



#### 1. College of Central Florida:

- **Agricultural Sciences Classroom Building: 12,229 GSF** building featuring classrooms, a teaching lab, vocational lab, simulation lab, office and student space. This will allow CF to become the leading agriculture workforce training center in the Florida College System.
- **Recurring Funding to Support Workforce Programs:** A.S. in Hospitality Management and Tourism, B.S in Teacher Education, Health Science Programs Expansion, Broadband Technician Certificate, New Geographic Information Systems Program

#### 2. Marion County Public Schools:

- Create a high school career pathway for mental health certifications and programming.

### Transportation Infrastructure

In 2024, the Florida legislature and Governor DeSantis championed transportation infrastructure with an investment of \$14.5 billion to fund 946 essential projects. The Ocala Metro CEP supports this continued investment that will assist with congestion issues within Marion County on I-75.



Marion County has one request supported by the Ocala Metro CEP:

**Roadway and Utility Improvements on NW 80<sup>th</sup> Avenue/NW 49<sup>th</sup> Street: 3.4 mile portion of NW 49<sup>th</sup> Street from NW 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue to NW 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

## 2025 Legislative Priorities

### Tourism Development

Between April 2023-March 2024, tourism in Ocala/Marion County supported 10,400 local jobs and visitors spent \$682,196,700 on accommodations, restaurants, groceries, transportation, attractions, entertainment, and shopping. The Ocala Metro CEP supports tourism projects that will continue to grow the economic growth and jobs for our community.

1. Support Local Bill: Defining an Equestrian Sport Facility
2. Allow visitors to swim at Silver Springs State Park, a priority of Marion County.
3. Support the funding request for improvements to the Bradford-Ma Barker House, a legislative priority for Marion County.



### Affordable Living

Affordable Living continues to serve as an issue not only in Marion County but all throughout Florida, including issues with affordable housing, continued increases in homeowners' insurance, auto insurance, and property taxes.

**Affordable Housing:** Continue to refine the Live Local Act that passed in 2023 that is working toward a statewide attainable housing strategy to increase the availability of affordable housing opportunities.

**Homeowners' and Auto Insurance:** Support legislation that continues to address lawsuit abuse reform efforts to reduce the cost of rising homeowners' and auto insurance. Between 2019 and 2023, the average homeowner premiums in Florida have surged nearly 60%. Florida residents pay around 66% more than the national average for auto insurance.

**Property Taxes:** Continue to support property tax reform similar to Amendment 5: Annual Adjustment to the Value of Certain Homestead Exemptions that passed in the November 2024 election.

