

August 15, 2024

The Honorable Ron DeSantis  
Governor of Florida  
Executive Office of Governor Ron DeSantis  
400 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

The Honorable Kathleen Passidomo  
President, Florida Senate  
409 The Capitol  
404 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

The Honorable Paul Renner  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
420 The Capitol  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Kara Collins-Gomez  
Coordinator, Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability  
111 West Madison Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Re: 2024 Direct-Support Organization Report

Dear Governor DeSantis, President Passidomo, Speaker Renner, and Ms. Collins-Gomez:

In accordance with section 20.058(3), Florida Statutes (F.S.), the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce) files the enclosed report submitted by VISIT FLORIDA. VISIT FLORIDA was established pursuant to s. 288.1226, F.S., as a direct-support organization to serve as Florida's official source for travel planning to visitors across the globe.

It is FloridaCommerce's recommendation to continue the agency's association with VISIT FLORIDA as a direct-support organization. VISIT FLORIDA plays a key role in fortifying Florida's economy through international promotion and marketing of tourism.

If you have any questions regarding this recommendation, please feel free to contact me by phone at 850-245-7174 or by email at [Alex.Kelly@Commerce.FL.gov](mailto:Alex.Kelly@Commerce.FL.gov).

Sincerely,

J. Alex Kelly  
Secretary

cc: Dana Young, President, VISIT FLORIDA

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111 West Madison Street  
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Re: 2024 Direct-Support Organization Report

Dear Governor DeSantis, President Passidomo, Speaker Renner, and Ms. Collins-Gomez:

In accordance with section 20.058(3), Florida Statutes (F.S.), the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce) files the enclosed report submitted by SelectFlorida, Inc. SelectFlorida was established pursuant to s. 288.012, F.S., effective July 1, 2023, as a direct-support organization to conduct activities related to international trade and development.

It is FloridaCommerce's recommendation to continue the agency's association with SelectFlorida as a direct-support organization. SelectFlorida plays a key role in fortifying Florida's economy through international trade and investment.

If you have any questions regarding this recommendation, please feel free to contact me by phone at 850-245-7174 or by email at [Alex.Kelly@Commerce.FL.gov](mailto:Alex.Kelly@Commerce.FL.gov).

Sincerely,

J. Alex Kelly  
Secretary

cc: TJ Villamil, President, SelectFlorida

August 15, 2024

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Coordinator, Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability  
111 West Madison Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Re: 2024 Direct-Support Organization Report

Dear Governor DeSantis, President Passidomo, Speaker Renner, and Ms. Collins-Gomez:

In accordance with section 20.058(3), Florida Statutes (F.S.), the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce) files the enclosed report submitted by Florida Sports Foundation. Florida Sports Foundation was established pursuant to s. 288.1229, F.S., effective July 1, 2023, as a direct-support organization to serve as the official sports promotion and development organization of Florida.

It is FloridaCommerce's recommendation to continue the agency's association with Florida Sports Foundation as a direct-support organization. Florida Sports Foundation plays a key role in fortifying Florida's economy by assisting Florida communities with securing, hosting, and retaining sports events and sports-related businesses that generate significant economic impact.

If you have any questions regarding this recommendation, please feel free to contact me by phone at 850-245-7174 or by email at [Alex.Kelly@Commerce.FL.gov](mailto:Alex.Kelly@Commerce.FL.gov).

Sincerely,

J. Alex Kelly  
Secretary

cc: Angela Suggs, President, Florida Sports Foundation



101 N. Monroe Street, Suite 900  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

VISITFLORIDA.org

August 1, 2024

Ms. Ava Dillard  
Partnership manager  
Office of Partnership Engagement  
Florida Department of Commerce  
107 E Madison Street, MSC 80  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: 2024 Direct Support Organization Report

Dear Ms. Dillard:

In accordance with Section 20.058 Florida Statutes (F.S.), VISIT FLORIDA hereby submits the enclosed DSO report to the Florida Department of Commerce (Commerce). In summary, the statute specifies the organizational requirements to submit an annual report for each designated direct-support organization of Commerce and the publication of that information on Commerce's websites.

Also attached to this report is a copy of VISIT FLORIDA's most recent IRS form 990 and a copy of our Code of Ethics. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you require any additional information.

Pursuant to s. 20.058(1)(g), F.S., I hereby certify that VISIT FLORIDA has complied with s. 20.058(4), F.S.

Thank you,

*Craig Thomas*

Craig Thomas



COO and General Counsel

## About VISIT FLORIDA

### **Purpose:**

Brighten the lives of all

### **Vision:**

Establish Florida as the No. 1 travel destination in the world

### **Mission:**

Enrich the quality of life in our communities

### **Values:**

Make an impact

Work purposefully and live passionately

Persist

VISIT FLORIDA, the state's official tourism marketing corporation, serves as Florida's official source for travel planning to visitors across the globe. VISIT FLORIDA is not a government agency, but rather a not-for-profit corporation created as a public/private partnership by the Florida Legislature in 1996 (f.s. 288.1226).

Each year, the Florida Legislature appropriates public funding to be allocated for tourism marketing. VISIT FLORIDA is required to match those public funds dollar-for-dollar, which is done by actively recruiting the state's tourism industry to invest as Partners through cooperative advertising campaigns, promotional programs and many other marketing ventures. VISIT FLORIDA's public/private partnership works with tourism industry businesses across the state, including major strategic partnerships with Busch Gardens Tampa, Experience Kissimmee, LEGOLAND Florida Resort, SeaWorld Parks & Resorts Orlando, and Universal Orlando Resort.

VISIT FLORIDA facilitates tourism industry participation in domestic and international travel trade and consumer shows, as well as media missions 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.

VISIT FLORIDA's corporate office is located at 101 North Monroe Street, Suite 900, Tallahassee, Florida 32301. The office can be reached at (850) 488-5607.

## VISIT FLORIDA Results

Florida’s tourism industry has continued to flourish. In Calendar Year (CY) 2023, 140.6 million visitors came to Florida. This is the largest amount of visitors Florida has ever received in a single year, a 7.3 percent increase over CY 2019 and a 2.3 percent increase over CY 2022.

Florida’s tourism industry is a juggernaut of the state’s economy. An economic impact study conducted on 2022 visitor spending showed that out-of-state visitors contributed \$121.5 billion to Florida’s GDP. Tourism generated \$16.3 billion in state and local revenues in 2022, saving each household in Florida \$1,840. And one out of every six private sector jobs in Florida is directly related to tourism activity in that same time period. In 2024, 57 percent of Florida residents agreed or strongly agreed that Florida’s tourism industry results in a better quality of life for them and their families.

Additionally, in Calendar Year 2023, Florida held 14.8 percent of the market share of domestic travelers, outpacing competing states, and had a top-2 market share of overseas travelers to the nation.

### VISIT FLORIDA PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR STATE FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY 2023-2024 ACTUALS	PERFORMANCE STANDARDS
Annual percentage of domestic visitors to Florida influenced by VISIT FLORIDA’s primary marketing programs	56.3%	60%
Percentage increase in likelihood of visiting Florida after exposure to VISIT FLORIDA’s digital marketing among domestic audience.	37.3%*	100%
Percentage of domestic leisure travelers reporting awareness of VISIT FLORIDA’s marketing	58.0%	45%
Industry rating of VISIT FLORIDA’s performance in promoting tourism to Florida	8.6/10	8.5/10
Annual share of domestic vacation trips*	22.6%	22%
Number of strategies in the Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development 2018-2023 being implemented by VISIT FLORIDA	4	4
Total number of individual businesses, located in RAO-designated communities, actively participating in VISIT FLORIDA marketing activities, and the percentage coverage of the total RAO-designated communities.	799/100%	1,100/90%

\*Due to changes in consumer behavior and the privacy policies of mobile phone and other software companies, it has become more difficult to measure the effectiveness of VISIT FLORIDA’s ads in this way. VISIT FLORIDA continues to work with the data provider for this performance measure to ensure that adequate, accurate data is available.

More information about VISIT FLORIDA may be found at: [VISITFLORIDA.org](https://www.visitflorida.org)

## THREE YEAR PLAN

VISIT FLORIDA's long-term vision is being developed through a strategic planning process set to conclude with final board of directors' approval in Q1 2025. The outcome will be a rolling 4-year strategic plan, updated annually to maintain a continuous 4-year horizon. Each year, VISIT FLORIDA also releases an annual marketing plan with actionable insights and short-term tactics aligned with the long-term vision. The information below reflects the most current status of this planning process.

VISIT FLORIDA's long-term vision is to be the number 1 travel destination in the world. Its mission is to use the Florida vacation brand to grow Florida's share of the global travel market and enhance the quality of life for Floridians. Long-term goals include:

- Protecting the valuable Florida vacation brand, valued at \$142B as of June 2024 by a third-party service, with \$20.5B attributed to general appeal managed by VISIT FLORIDA. The Florida tourism brand ranks among the top 5 U.S. corporate brands and holds a AAA- ('extremely strong') rating.
- Protecting market share, with VISIT FLORIDA currently #1 in domestic vacations and #2 in international visits to the U.S.
- Maximizing the economic impact of travel and tourism. Most recent findings (from a 2024 study) concluded that out-of-state visitors contributed \$121.5B in 2022.
- Monitor and educate on Floridians' perceptions of tourism. VISIT FLORIDA will continue periodic surveys, share findings with stakeholders, and participate in responsive actions (if any).

Time-bound long-term goals for each of the above are being defined in the strategic planning process.

Long-term strategic pillars define those areas of the tourism marketing ecosystem for which VISIT FLORIDA is uniquely positioned to provide the most value, and include: maintaining a state-wide and regional focus, creating partner value through alignment with the Florida vacation brand, and leading industry response during crisis.

Long-term tactics will evolve from the latest annual marketing plan. The foundational strategic brand direction for the next three years is to “find the new in the known,” using the familiarity of a Florida vacation as an anchor to introduce new experiences and encourage repeat visits. VISIT FLORIDA will continue year-round integrated marketing campaigns targeting various traveler segments, including family vacations, winter sun seekers, outdoor adventures, arts and culture, impulse travelers, and Florida residents. International efforts will continue to focus on top origin markets such as Canada, the United Kingdom, various countries in Latin America, Germany and France with primary tactics being public relations and business-to-business partnerships with in-market travel sales companies.

A copy of VISIT FLORIDA's Marketing Plan can be found here:

<https://www.visitflorida.org/about-us/what-we-do/marketing-plan/>

A copy of VISIT FLORIDA's Strategic Plan can be found here:

<https://visitflorida.app.box.com/s/up2lfi2ktc6gzntjmwskoh70g1xhbf1h>



# VISIT FLORIDA Employee Code of Ethics



## PURPOSE

It is essential that VISIT FLORIDA, a direct-support organization created by law and funded by state tax dollars as well as private investment, conduct its affairs honorably and in accordance with the highest ethical principles. To conform fully to the letter and spirit of legislative policy, and to further strengthen the faith and confidence of Floridians in VISIT FLORIDA, the following standards of conduct are required of every employee.

## Acceptance of Food, Beverages, Lodging, Entertainment, and Gifts

No VISIT FLORIDA employee shall accept or receive food, beverages, lodging, entertainment, or gifts from a tourist or economic development entity that receives revenue from a tax imposed pursuant to s. 125.0104 (Tourist Development Tax a.k.a. the “Bed Tax”), s. 125.0108 (Tourist Impact Tax), s. 212.0305 (Convention Development Tax), or from any person, vendor, or other entity, doing business with VISIT FLORIDA unless such food, beverage, lodging, entertainment, or gift is available to similarly situated members of the general public.

### Explanation

VISIT FLORIDA employees may not accept food, beverages, lodging, entertainment, or gifts (anything of value) from a Florida destination marketing organization (DMO) or local economic development entity, VISIT FLORIDA vendors, or VISIT FLORIDA partners unless the item is available to similarly situated members of the general public or the employee pays the fair value of the item within ninety (90) days. For purposes of this policy, members of the “general public” are not “similarly situated” by virtue of occupation or industry alone. Items available to “similarly situated” members of the “general public” are items that are available to all people within an area—ordinary people that are not members of a particular organization or possess a special status, privilege, or knowledge that confers special treatment.

**For example:** You attend an event hosted by a DMO and the event is open to anyone that wishes to attend. Food and beverages are available.

- You may accept.

**For example:** You attend a conference, convention, luncheon, or other similar event hosted by a DMO or entity doing business with VISIT FLORIDA and a registration fee is paid (note: VISIT FLORIDA may pay or reimburse employees for expenses incurred in

the performance of their duties). The registration fee covers entrance, food, beverages, lodging, entertainment, and/or gifts received in connection with the event.

- You may accept. You should not seek reimbursement from VISIT FLORIDA for meals provided at the event since they are included in the registration fee.

**For example:** You attend a conference, convention, luncheon, or other similar event hosted by a DMO or entity doing business with VISIT FLORIDA and there is a registration fee. Your registration fee is waived because you have agreed to actively participate in hosting the event (e.g., as a speaker or panel member). The registration fee covers entrance, food, beverages, lodging, entertainment, and/or gifts received in connection with the event.

- You may accept. Any other support personnel that have an actual need to attend the event to support your participation, even if not directly participating themselves, may also accept. Support personnel must have a real and justifiable need to attend the event for the purpose of supporting your participation.

**For example:** You work closely with a DMO. The entity provides you a gift bag in appreciation of your efforts.

- You must politely decline.

**For example:** You attend a meeting at the office of a DMO and are offered snacks.

- You must politely decline.

**For example:** A VISIT FLORIDA vendor offers to take you to lunch or bring food to a meeting or presentation.

- You must politely decline or personally pay for your own meal. If you are otherwise eligible for meal reimbursement pursuant to VISIT FLORIDA's travel policy you may be reimbursed for the meal in accordance with that policy.

**For example:** You plan to attend a conference, convention, luncheon, or other similar event hosted by a DMO to represent VISIT FLORIDA and/or sell VISIT FLORIDA products or partnerships. There is no registration fee but other tourism industry stakeholders are invited and in attendance.

- If you plan to eat the lunch you must provide a personal check in the most professional and unobtrusive manner possible. If you are otherwise eligible for meal reimbursement pursuant to VISIT FLORIDA's travel policy you may be reimbursed for the meal in accordance with that policy.

**For example:** You are offered an opportunity to visit a Florida attraction, restaurant, or location for free or at a reduced rate to increase your awareness and knowledge of the business or location. This offer is made so that you may better communicate and/or sell the Florida experience to visitors and/or potential visitors when serving them at Welcome Centers, planning marketing strategies, developing creative content, or otherwise contributing to tourism promotion for the state.

- You must decline.

**For example:** VISIT FLORIDA's public relations or travel trade professionals have identified and recruited a number of travel journalists, influencers, tour operators, travel agents, or similar

entities to participate in a familiarization tour. The tour will showcase several Florida locations and directly benefit many VISIT FLORIDA partners and Florida businesses. You are assigned to work on the tour and create the itinerary, greet the guests, organize travel between competing regions of the state, and accompany the guests on the trip to ensure the experience is positive and results in increased Florida travel stories or sales. Your attendance and interaction with the guests assists participating partners and is also critical to your role at VISIT FLORIDA because your job as a public relations or travel trade professional is to influence media and sales of Florida tourism products and to speak as an authoritative agent of the state's tourism industry. In connection with the trip, VISIT FLORIDA's participating partners offer free entrance, food, beverages, lodging, entertainment, and/or gifts in consideration of the media and/or sales opportunity.

- You may attend all stages of the familiarization tour as assigned. However, when eating at a restaurant you must pay for your meal and seek reimbursement within the parameters of VISIT FLORIDA's travel policy (any payment in excess of allowable amounts must be paid personally). You may accompany the guests to their hotel, but may not stay at the hotel yourself unless you pay for the room and the rate is within the parameters of VISIT FLORIDA's travel policy (or you personally pay the difference). You may, for the sole purpose of coordinating, hosting, and working the familiarization tour, accept free entrance to locations the guests attend to allow for the performance of your job duties. You should not accept free entrance to locations if it is not connected to your job duties.

**For Example:** VISIT FLORIDA is limited to paying lodging rates no greater than \$150 in most circumstances. VISIT FLORIDA seeks to negotiate with hotels to obtain a rate within the allowable range. A hotel chain is willing to offer a rate to VISIT FLORIDA that is comparable to the rate offered to government employees and other similarly situated members of the general public that have a similar demand for lodging.

- This is allowable.

## Doing Business with VISIT FLORIDA

No VISIT FLORIDA employee acting on behalf of VISIT FLORIDA shall, either directly or indirectly, purchase, rent, or lease any realty, goods, or services for VISIT FLORIDA from any business entity of which the employee or the employee's spouse or child is an officer, partner, director, or proprietor or in which such employee or employee's spouse or child, or any combination of them, has a material interest. Nor shall any VISIT FLORIDA employee, rent, lease, or sell any realty, goods, or services to VISIT FLORIDA.

### *Explanation*

If you are responsible for purchasing things on behalf of VISIT FLORIDA, always consider any personal connection you may have with prospective service providers or vendors. If you have a conflict, disclose the conflict and remove yourself from the decision-making process. Additionally, do not attempt to sell things to VISIT FLORIDA.

**For example:** You are a responsible for the selection of a vendor to provide VISIT FLORIDA services. Your daughter is one of the service providers competing for the contract. You

should disclose the conflict and remove yourself from the decision- making process. This does not mean that your daughter may not be considered—it simply means that you may not be involved with the selection.

## (2) Prohibition of Unauthorized Compensation

No VISIT FLORIDA employee, or his or her spouse or minor child shall, at any time, accept any compensation, payment, or thing of value when the employee knows, or, with the exercise of reasonable care, should know, that it was given to influence any action in which the employee was expected to participate in his or her capacity as a VISIT FLORIDA employee.

### *Explanation*

Simply put, do not take a bribe. Importantly, this applies to spouses and minor children.

## Misuse of Position

No VISIT FLORIDA employee shall corruptly use or attempt to use his or her position, or any property or resource of VISIT FLORIDA which may be within his or her trust, or perform his or her duties, to secure a special privilege, benefit, or exemption for himself, herself, or others.

### *Explanation*

Avoid using your position, or VISIT FLORIDA resources under your control, to benefit others in any way that could be perceived as wrong.

**For example:** You have the keys to a VISIT FLORIDA van. You allow your son to use the van on the weekends to get around.

- You have misused your position.

**For example:** VISIT FLORIDA is conducting a competitive solicitation. You are not an authorized procurement liaison and choose to discuss the solicitation with interested parties while the competitive process is ongoing.

- You have misused your position by conferring a benefit (inside information) on select vendors.

## Conflicting Employment or Contractual Relationship

No VISIT FLORIDA employee shall have or hold any employment or contractual relationship with any business entity or agency which is doing business with VISIT FLORIDA. Nor shall any employee of VISIT FLORIDA have or hold any employment or contractual relationship that will create a continuing or frequently recurring conflict between his or her private interests and the performance of his or her VISIT FLORIDA duties, or that would impede the full and faithful discharge of his or her VISIT FLORIDA duties.

All outside employment must be approved by the President of VISIT FLORIDA. Outside

employment includes any regularly performed activity from which an employee receives income. It also includes non-paying positions an employee may hold with an organization (e.g., a non-paying position on the board of directors for a nonprofit).

Requests for approval of outside employment should be directed to the General Counsel. The General Counsel or President will notify employees of the President's approval in writing.

#### *Explanation*

Seek approval prior to accepting outside employment through the General Counsel. If proposed outside employment will cause a conflict with your VISIT FLORIDA duties, it will not be approved.

### (3) Disclosure or Use of Certain Information

No VISIT FLORIDA employee shall disclose or use information not available to members of the general public and gained by reason of his or her position for his or her personal gain or benefit, or for the personal gain or benefit of any other person or business entity.

#### *Explanation*

The vast majority of VISIT FLORIDA records are public by virtue of Florida's public records laws. However, to the extent that you are exposed to records that are not public, or information that is not contained within a record and is proprietary or confidential, you should not use it to benefit yourself or others.

**For example:** Solely as a result of working at VISIT FLORIDA, you learn the specific details of a certain organization's sensitive business information. This information is not public. You should not use this information for your own benefit, and you should not disclose this information to others for their benefit.

## Nepotism

No VISIT FLORIDA employee may appoint, employ, promote, advance, or advocate for the appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement of, a relative into a position over which the employee exercises control. Mere approval of budgets is not an exercise of control.

Relative means: father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother, half-sister, grandparent, great grandparent, grandchild, great grandchild, step grandparent, step great grandparent, step grandchild, step great grandchild, person who is engaged to be married to the employee or who otherwise holds himself or herself out as or is generally known as the person whom the employee intends to marry or with whom the employee intends to form a household, or any other natural person having the same legal residence as the employee.

### *Explanation*

Do not attempt to help your relatives obtain employment in a position over which you have control.

**For example:** VISIT FLORIDA is in the process of selecting an intern. You should not advocate for your son to be selected. You may forward his application to the decision-maker but you should not apply pressure or take any further action beyond that point.

### Use of VISIT FLORIDA Funds on Food, Beverages, Lodging, Entertainment, or Gifts.

VISIT FLORIDA funds may not be expended for food, beverages, lodging, entertainment, or gifts for employees of the corporation, board members of the corporation, or employees of a tourist or economic development entity that receives revenue from a tax imposed pursuant to s. 125.0104 (Tourist Development Tax a.k.a. the “Bed Tax”), s. 125.0108 (Tourist Impact Tax), s. 212.0305 (Convention Development Tax), except as authorized by VISIT FLORIDA’s travel policy.

### *Explanation*

VISIT FLORIDA employees with spending authority must ensure that corporate funds are not spent on food, beverages, lodging, entertainment, or gifts (anything of value) for VISIT FLORIDA employees, board members, or employees of a DMO or local economic development entity. VISIT FLORIDA employees may be reimbursed in accordance with its travel policy.

**For Example:** VISIT FLORIDA hosts an event. There is a registration fee which covers the cost of attendance, food, beverages, lodging, entertainment, and/or gifts associated with the event.

- DMO employees may pay the registration fee and participate fully in the event.

**For Example:** VISIT FLORIDA hosts an event. There is a registration fee which covers the cost of attendance, food, beverages, lodging, entertainment, or gifts associated with the event. A DMO employee is engaged to participate in hosting the event (e.g., speaking or participating on a panel). Similar participants are provided free entrance to the event to allow for their participation.

- VISIT FLORIDA may waive the registration fee to allow for the DMO employee to participate actively in hosting the event and as consideration for the services provided.

**For Example:** VISIT FLORIDA hosts an event attended by people that are not employees of a DMO. There is no registration. Food, beverages, lodging, entertainment, and/or gifts are provided in connection with the event.

- This is allowable. The items provided should be consumed by attendees (e.g., media personnel, travel trade professionals, etc.) and not VISIT FLORIDA employees.

**For Example:** VISIT FLORIDA provides food, beverages, lodging, entertainment, or gifts at a trade show for the purpose of competing to attract tour operators, consumers, media or other similar attendees to its booth. VISIT FLORIDA has sold space within the booth to both private businesses and DMOs (which in turn have resold space to private entities). As a result, the booth contains a mix of VISIT FLORIDA employees, DMO employees, private businesses partnering with VISIT FLORIDA, and trade show attendees.

- This is allowable. VISIT FLORIDA is not prohibited from expending funds in this way. Best practice in this situation would be to display a professional note near the items welcoming trade show attendees to accept the offering.

**For Example:** VISIT FLORIDA is having a board meeting. It is customary for organizations to provide food and beverage to volunteer board members at meetings.

- VISIT FLORIDA funds should not be used to provide food or beverages for employee or board members.

## COMPLIANCE

The failure of a VISIT FLORIDA employee to adhere to these standards of conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Any questions should be directed to the General Counsel of VISIT FLORIDA.



Direct-Support Organization  
2024 Legislative Report

**SELECTFLORIDA**



August 1, 2024

Ms. Ava Dillard  
Partnership Manager  
Office of Partnership Engagement  
Division of Economic Development  
FloridaCommerce  
107 E Madison Street, MSC 80  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: 2024 Direct-Support Organization Report

Dear Ms. Dillard:

In accordance with Section 20.058, Florida Statutes (F.S.), SelectFlorida hereby files the enclosed reports submitted to FloridaCommerce. In summary, the statute specifies the organizational requirements to submit an annual report for each designated direct-support organization of FloridaCommerce and the publication of that information on FloridaCommerce's websites.

SelectFlorida is currently conducting their annual financial audit. Once complete, the IRS Form 990 will be filed. A copy will be provided once accepted by the IRS. Additionally, included are SelectFlorida's preliminary Code of Ethics, which must be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors at the September 9th meeting. Once the Code of Ethics is approved, FloridaCommerce will receive a final copy. The board members received Ethics training at the January 18, 2024, Board of Directors meeting as shown in the meeting minutes included on page twelve of this report.

Pursuant to s. 20.058(1)(g), F.S., I hereby certify that SelectFlorida has complied with s. 20.058(4), F.S.

Sincerely,



TJ Villamil  
President, International Commerce

## SelectFlorida’s Mission and Statutory Authority

Founded in 2023, SelectFlorida is a 501(c)(3) direct-support organization authorized pursuant to s. 288.012(6), Florida Statutes (F.S.). SelectFlorida serves as the state’s international trade and investment promotion agency providing export assistance, promoting Florida globally as an ideal investment location, managing a network of international offices, attracting foreign direct investment, and building strategic partnerships to foster international business in the state, all in conjunction with FloridaCommerce.

The SelectFlorida mission is to attract, retain and create high-wage jobs for Floridians. SelectFlorida serves as a catalyst for economic development by promoting Florida as a premier business destination and expanding the state’s economy through private-sector job creation. The organization works with international businesses seeking to invest and expand in Florida, utilizing our expansive network of international offices in key global markets. SelectFlorida also supports small to medium sized manufacturers in growing their business overseas through a consultative approach to export assistance,

## Recent Accomplishments

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY 2023-2024 ACTUALS*	PERFORMANCE STANDARDS
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE &amp; FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT</b>		
Number of Florida based businesses assisted by SelectFlorida for international trade.	1,805	1,300
Number of companies with export sales attributable to trade events, shows, missions and consultations.	131	120
Number of companies with export sales attributable to Certificates of Free Sale.	680	600
Satisfaction of businesses participating in international events. Measured by asking “Were your objectives met?”	98%	85%
Number of events conducted.	19	18
Number of proposed jobs to be created by businesses outside of the United States assisted by SelectFlorida.	1,826	525

\*As of 7/18/24

## SelectFlorida’s Three-Year Forecast

The next three years are critical for SelectFlorida as the organization seeks to meet existing and growing demand for international programs and services. Throughout the upcoming three fiscal years, SelectFlorida will be involved in the following activities designed to meet the needs of the state and our constituents. By focusing on these strategic activities, SelectFlorida will continue to play a pivotal role in promoting international trade and investment, thereby contributing to the economic development and prosperity of Florida.

- **Goal 1: Partnerships and Footprint:** Align and leverage private, public and community resources.
  - **Objective 1.1:** Strengthen local, regional, statewide and international partnerships to accomplish Florida’s economic, quality of life and quality of places goals.
  - **Objective 1.2:** Maintain a network of representative offices abroad in markets with high potential to attract investment and jobs to Florida, or which present significant exporting opportunities for Florida-based companies.

- **Objective 1.3:** Integrate long-term investment strategies for statewide and regional economic development.
- **Goal 2: Export Assistance and Trade Services:** Provide tailored support to assist business expansion into international markets.
  - **Objective 2.1:** Offer resources such as market research, export readiness assessments and participation in international trade shows and missions.
  - **Objective 2.2:** Continue to serve small and medium-sized manufacturers in Florida with export assistance and trade services programs.
  - **Objective 2.3:** Promote exports and inward investment and enable a range of other activities focused on promoting Florida's bilateral commercial and institutional ties with each market/country.
  - **Objective 2.4:** Ensure state, regional and local agencies provide collaborative and timely customer service to businesses and employees.
- **Goal 3: Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Projects:** Attract and facilitate FDI to diversify Florida's economy and expanding national and global markets.
  - **Objective 3.1:** Deliver FDI project establishments around Florida from the network of foreign office contractors that serve the state.
  - **Objective 3.2:** Collaborate with Florida's local economic development organizations to support the growth of international business in Florida.
  - **Objective 3.3:** Provide comprehensive support services to foreign investors.
  - **Objective 3.4:** Encourage industry diversification to ensure a sustainable business climate.
- **Goal 4: Leadership Missions and Strategic Initiatives:** Serve and support Florida's leadership by executing leadership missions, international partnership development, and other strategically important initiatives.
  - **Objective 4.1:** Execute or participate in statewide and overseas events to support strategic initiatives and business and trade development.
  - **Objective 4.2:** Encourage export growth and market diversification.
  - **Objective 4.3:** Brand and consistently market Florida as the best state for business.

<b>SUBJECT:</b> Code of Ethics	
<b>PURPOSE/SCOPE:</b>	
<p>The Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees, adopted by the Florida Legislature as Chapter 112, Part III, Florida Statutes, contains standards of ethical conduct and disclosures applicable to public officers, employees, candidates, lobbyists, and others in state and local government. SelectFlorida has a responsibility to embrace the highest ethical standards by promoting honest, ethical, and open structure within its organization. Directors should avoid any conduct (whether in the context of business, financial or social relationships) which might undermine the trust placed in them, whether that conduct is unethical or lends itself to the appearance of ethical impropriety. SelectFlorida values its good reputation and asserts that the appearance of impropriety harms an organization as much as any unethical or improper act.</p> <p>SelectFlorida, its board, councils and any advisory committees or similar groups created by SelectFlorida are subject to the provisions of Chapter 119 relating to public records, and to those provisions of Chapter 286 relating to public meetings. Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, commonly known as Florida’s Public Records Law, provides information on public records in Florida, including policies, definitions, exemptions, general information on records access, inspection, examination, and duplication. It is the policy of the State of Florida that “all state, county, and municipal records are open for personal inspection and copying by any person”. Providing access to public records is the duty of each agency” (Chapter 119.01, Florida Statutes). Included agencies are “public or private agencies, persons, partnerships, corporations or business entities acting on behalf of any public agency” (Chapter 119.011, Florida Statutes), “or other separate unit of government created or established by law” (Chapter 119.0701, Florida Statutes). Chapter 286, Florida Statutes, also known as Florida’s Sunshine Law, establishes a basic right of access to meetings of boards, commissions and other governing bodies of state and local governmental agencies or authorities. The law describes how boards conduct public meetings, how these meetings are noticed, who may attend, and how they may be accessed. This law also describes what records must be kept and made available to the public upon request.</p>	

<b>Director</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b> <b>Fiscal Policy</b>	<b>Revision Date</b>

- I. **Authority**
- Chapter 112, Florida Statutes
  - Chapter 119, Florida Statutes
  - Chapter 286, Florida Statutes

## II. Definitions

1. **SelectFlorida** – As used in this Policy when referencing Chapters 119 and 286, F.S., relating to public meetings and records, its employees, divisions, boards, advisory councils, or similar entities created or managed by SelectFlorida.
2. **Public Officer** – As used in this Policy, SelectFlorida President and staff shall be considered public officers or employees and SelectFlorida considered their agency.
3. **Employee** – As used in this Policy, all SelectFlorida employees, including OPS employees.
4. **Relative** – Any person who meets the definition of that term in the Statutory Code. Consistent with section 112.312(21), Florida Statutes (F.S.), a Relative means an individual who is related to a public officer or employee as father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother, half-sister, grandparent, great grandparent, grandchild, great grandchild, step grandparent, step great grandparent, step grandchild, step great grandchild, person who is engaged to be married to the public officer or employee or who otherwise holds himself or herself out as or is generally known as the person whom the public officer or employee intends to marry or with whom the public officer or employee intends to form a household, or any other natural person having the same legal residence as the public officer or employee.
5. **Gift** – Anything accepted by a person, whether directly or indirectly by another, for that person's benefit and for which no payment is made. A gift may include real property or its use; tangible or intangible personal property or its use; a preferential rate or terms on a transaction not available to other similarly situated; forgiveness of a debt; transportation; lodging; parking; food or beverage; dues, fees and tickets; plants and flowers; personal services for which a fee is normally charged by the provider; and any other thing or service having an attributable value.

## III. Notification

All SelectFlorida employees shall be notified of this Policy and its procedures by one of the following methods: new employee orientation, SelectFlorida communications via employee distribution list, or annual ethics training.

## IV. Procedures/Policy

### 1. **General Provisions**

Employees shall comply with the requirements of this Policy as well as the Statutory Code; Article I, Section 24 of the Florida Constitution, Chapters 112 and 119, F.S., and Chapter 34, Florida Administrative Code. This Policy serves as an increase or additional standard of conduct for employees and in no way replaces or alters statutory or other legal and ethical requirements. Thus, to the extent that a statutory provision is not enhanced by an express provision of this Policy, the Statutory Code applies. Accordingly, all employees shall familiarize themselves with the requirements of this Statutory Code.

### 2. **Acceptance of Food, Beverages, Lodging, Entertainment, and Gifts.**

No employee, including their spouse and children, shall accept or receive food, beverages, lodging, entertainment, or gifts from an economic development entity or from any person, vendor, or other entity, doing business with SelectFlorida unless such food, beverage, lodging, entertainment, or gift is available to similarly situated members of the general public. For the purposes of this policy, members of the "general public" are not "similarly situated" by virtue of occupation or industry alone. Items available to "similarly situated" members of the "general public" are items that are available to all people within an area.

**Scenario 1:** You attend an event hosted by an economic development entity and the event is open to anyone that wishes to attend. Food and beverages are available.

- You may accept the food and beverage.

**Scenario 2:** You attend a conference, convention, luncheon, or other similar event hosted by an entity you are doing business with where a registration fee was paid. The registration fee covers entrance, food, beverages, lodging, entertainment and/or gifts received during the event.

- You may accept the offerings.
- If your registration fee was waived due to your participation in hosting the event (e.g., as a speaker or panel member), you may still accept the offerings. Any other support personnel that have an actual need to attend the event to support your participation, even if not directly participating themselves, may also accept. Support personnel must have a real and justifiable need to attend the event for the purpose of supporting your participation.

**Scenario 3:** You work closely with an entity or attend a meeting at an entity's office and are offered snacks or a gift bag.

- You must politely decline.

**Scenario 4:** A SelectFlorida vendor offers to take you to lunch or bring food to a meeting or presentation.

- You must politely decline or personally pay for your own meal.

**Scenario 5:** You plan to attend a conference, convention, luncheon, or other similar event hosted by an economic development entity to represent SelectFlorida. There is no registration fee, but other industry stakeholders are invited and in attendance. Lunch is offered by the entity.

- If you plan to eat the lunch provided you must provide a form of payment, for your meal, in the most professional and unobtrusive manner possible.

Employees with questions or concerns should consult SelectFlorida's Chief Ethics Officer. In accordance with s. 288.012, F.S., SelectFlorida is limited to paying lodging rates and travel expenses, for employees and board members, in accordance with s. 112.061, F.S.

### 3. Conflict of Interest

No employee acting on behalf of SelectFlorida shall either directly or indirectly, purchase, rent or lease any realty, goods or services from any business entity of which the employee or the employee's spouse or child is an officer, partner, director or proprietor or in which such employee or employee's spouse or child, or any combination of them, has a material interest. Nor shall any employee rent, lease or sell any realty goods or services to SelectFlorida.

If you are responsible for purchasing things on behalf of SelectFlorida, always consider any personal connection you may have with prospective service providers or vendors. If you have a conflict, disclose the conflict and remove yourself from the decision-making process.

**Scenario 1:** You are responsible for selecting a vendor to provide goods or services to SelectFlorida. Your child is one of the service providers competing for the contract.

- You should disclose the conflict and remove yourself from the decision making process.
  - This does not mean your child's company or product is excluded, it simply means that you may not be involved with the selection.

#### **4. Prohibition of Unauthorized Compensation**

No employee, or their spouse or minor child shall, at any time, accept any compensation, payment, or thing of value when the employee knows, or should have known, that it was given to influence any action in which the employee was expected to participate in his or her capacity as a SelectFlorida employee.

- Simply put, do not take a bribe. This applies to spouses and minor children.

#### **5. Misuse of Position**

Employees shall use the powers and resources of SelectFlorida to advance the public interest and not for any personal benefit (other than salaried compensation and employer-provided benefits). No employee shall corruptly use or attempt to use his or her position, or any property or resource of SelectFlorida which may be within his or her trust, or perform his or her duties, to secure a special privilege, benefit or exemption for themselves or others.

**Scenario 1:** You have the keys to a SelectFlorida vehicle – whether owned or rented by. You allow a family member to use the vehicle.

- You have misused your position.

**Scenario 2:** SelectFlorida is conducting a competitive solicitation. You are not an authorized procurement liaison and choose to discuss the solicitation with interested parties while the competitive process is ongoing.

- You have misused your position by conferring a benefit (inside information) on select vendors.

#### **6. Conflicting Employment or Contractual Relationship**

No employee shall have or hold any employment or contractual relationship with any business entity or agency which is doing business with SelectFlorida. Nor shall any employee have or hold any employment or contractual relationship that will create a continuing or frequently recurring conflict between his or her private interests and the performance of his or her SelectFlorida duties, or that would impede the full and faithful discharge of his or her SelectFlorida duties.

All outside employment must be approved by the President of SelectFlorida. Outside employment includes any regularly performed activity from which an employee receives income. It also includes non-paying positions an employee may hold with an organization (e.g., a non-paying position on the board of directors for a nonprofit). Requests for approval of outside employment should be directed to the General Counsel. The General Counsel or President will notify employees of the President's approval in writing.

## **7. Disclosure or Use of Certain Information**

No employee shall disclose or use information not available to members of the general public and gained by reason of his or her position for his or her personal gain or benefit, or for the personal gain or benefit of any other person or business entity.

**Scenario 1:** Solely as a result of working at SelectFlorida, you learn the specific details of a certain organization's sensitive business information. This information is not public.

- You should not use this information for your own benefit, and you should not disclose this information to others for their benefit.

## **8. Nepotism**

No employee may appoint, employ, promote, advance or advocate for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement of, a relative into a SelectFlorida position over which the employee exercises control. Mere approval of budgets is not an exercise of control. Do not attempt to help your relatives obtain employment in a position over which you have control.

**Scenario 1:** SelectFlorida is in the process of selecting an intern. You should not advocate for your child to be selected.

- You may forward their application to the decision-maker but you should not apply pressure or take any further action beyond that point.

## **9. Use of SelectFlorida Funds on Food, Beverages, Lodging, Entertainment, or Gifts**

SelectFlorida funds may not be expended for food, beverages, lodging, entertainment, or gifts (anything of value) for employees of the corporation, or board members of the corporation except as authorized by SelectFlorida's travel policy. SelectFlorida employees with spending authority must ensure that corporate funds are not spent on food, beverages, lodging, entertainment or gifts for SelectFlorida employees, board members or employees of an economic development entity. SelectFlorida employees may be reimbursed in accordance with SelectFlorida's travel policy.

**Scenario 1:** SelectFlorida hosts an event. There is a registration fee which covers the cost of attendance, food, beverages, lodging, entertainment and/or gifts associated with the event.

- Entities that would like to have their employees attend the event may pay the registration fee and fully participate in the event.

**Scenario 2:** SelectFlorida hosts an event. There is a registration fee which covers the cost of attendance, food, beverages, lodging, entertainment and/or gifts associated with the



event. An economic development entity would like to have one of their employees participate in the event (e.g., speaking or participation in a panel).

- SelectFlorida may choose to waive or lower the cost of the participants registration fee to allow for the person to actively participate in hosting the event and as consideration for the services provided.

**Scenario 3:** SelectFlorida hosts an event attended by various entities and people of the general public. There is no registration fee. Food, beverages, lodging, entertainment and/or gifts are provided in connection with the event.

- This is allowable. The items should be consumed by attendees and not SelectFlorida employees.

**Scenario 4:** SelectFlorida is having a board meeting. It is customary for organizations to provide food and beverage to volunteer board members at meetings.

- SelectFlorida funds should not be used for food and beverages for employees or board members.

**Scenario 5:** SelectFlorida is having a board meeting away from headquarters. In order to better accomodate board members and registered participants, SelectFlorida has partnered with a local hotel to obtain a room block for 20 rooms, utilizaiton of the hotels confernce room and sponsored food and beverage for the meeting.

- This is allowable. However, SelectFlorida funds should only be used for lodging and travel expenses, in accordance with s. 112.061, F.S., pertaining to board members, SelectFlorida employees and support staff that have an actual need to attend the event.

## **10. Reporting Violations**

All ethics violations must be reported to the Chief Ethics Officer.

### **COMPLIANCE**

The failure of an employee to adhere to these standards of conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Any questions should be directed to the General Counsel of SelectFlorida.

### **FAQ**

#### **1. What is the State of Florida Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees?**

The State of Florida Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees contains standards of ethical conduct and disclosures applicable to public officers, employees, and ohters in State and local government. The code strives to ensure we, as public employees, conduct ourselves independently and imparially, not using our employee positions for private gain.

#### **2. Who at SelectFlorida is subject to the State of Florida Code of Ethics for Puclic Officers and Employees?**

All SelectFlorida employees are subject to the State of Florida Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees, Chapter 112 (Part III) of the Florida Statutes

#### **3. Where can I find the State of Florida Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees?**

You can find and read the State of Florida Code of Ehtics for Public Officers and Employees using this link. <https://www.ethics.state.fl.us/Research/EthicsLaws.aspx>

**4. Where do I complete my outside activity/conflict of interest disclosure?**

The Form can be obtained by reaching out to the General Council.

**5. Are there penalties for violations of the State of Florida Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees?**

Yes. Penalties for violation may include removal from employment, suuspension, reprimand, demotion, reductioin is salary level, and civil monetary penalties.



## SelectFlorida Board of Directors Meeting Minutes January 18, 2024

access the \$5 million that was appropriated by the legislature to operate and support the programs. The contract includes standards and accomplishments that the organization is accountable for to the people of the state. Secretary Kelly added that the statute set up SelectFlorida as a Direct Support Organization of the Department of Commerce, like VISIT FLORIDA and the Florida Sports Foundation.

### *Review and approval of the Revised SelectFlorida Budget for Fiscal Year 2024*

Matt Swanson gave an overview of the SelectFlorida budget for fiscal year 2024. He explained that the revenue reflects self-generated private revenue earned from trade missions, the Certificate of Free Sale program, and private donations. Expenditures decreased by \$800,000 due to expenses continuing to be covered by Enterprise Florida as it was winding down and SelectFlorida was being built. Program expenses support the core mission activities. The Enterprise Florida contribution of \$6.2 million is a one-time revenue item for strategic priorities or to help continue the operations of SelectFlorida.

### *Review and approval of the SelectFlorida Board of Directors' Fiscal Policy*

Matt Swanson gave an overview of the fiscal policy which puts appropriate controls in place for the expenditure of resources. The ultimate fiduciary responsibility for SelectFlorida is the board of directors. Unexpected expenses will require the staff to come to the board for approval. The board will pass a budget each year. An annual audit is also required.

### *Appointment of Board Officers (Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer)*

The board identified Jennifer Conoley as the Vice Chair. Chairman Britton asked for a motion.

Upon motion by Director Wilson, second by Director Simas, and unanimously carried by the directors present, the motion to appoint Jennifer Conoley as the SelectFlorida board Vice Chair was approved.

The board identified Mark Wilson as the Secretary. Chairman Britton asked for a motion.

Upon motion by Director Conoley, second by Director Kigel, and unanimously carried by the directors present, the motion to appoint Mark Wilson as the SelectFlorida Secretary was approved.

The board identified Beth Kigel as the Treasurer.

Upon motion by Director Simas, second by Director Wilson, and unanimously carried by the directors present, the motion to appoint Beth Kigel as the SelectFlorida Treasurer was approved.

Upon motion by Director Kigel, second by Director Conoley, and unanimously carried by the directors present, the motion to ratify the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws and the SelectFlorida contract with FloridaCommerce, to approve the revised SelectFlorida budget for fiscal year 2024 and the SelectFlorida Board of Directors' Fiscal Policy, as presented and in accordance with the terms of SelectFlorida Resolution 2024-01 attached hereto, was approved.

## Information Items

- **Open Government, Sunshine, and Ethics**  
Ashanti Breeden, Assistant General Counsel for FloridaCommerce, gave an overview of the Ethics and Sunshine requirements including financial disclosures for public officials, ethics, gifts, public records, and Sunshine law.  
  
Karen Gates, General Counsel for FloridaCommerce, gave an overview of E-Verify and the Foreign Countries of Concern policy prohibiting SelectFlorida from providing an economic incentive to a foreign entity from a country of concern.
- **Activities to Date – Trade Missions, Trade Shows Attended, Etc.**  
TJ Villamil reported on SelectFlorida's mission of international trade and investment through attraction of companies to Florida, retention and growth of those companies, and diversification of the economy. The



**SELECTFLORIDA**

The logo features a stylized figure in a blue and yellow circle, with blue waves below it, representing a swimmer or a person in motion.

# COME PLAY IN FLORIDA

**Florida Sports Foundation**  
2023-2024 Direct Support Organization Report

# Florida Sports Foundation

1203 Governor's Square Blvd.

Suite 300

Tallahassee, FL 32301

(850) 577-7212

[www.playinflorida.com](http://www.playinflorida.com)



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Letter of Attestation





# Program Overview





# Statutory Authority

Pursuant to section 288.1229 F.S., Florida Sports Foundation is a direct support organization of Florida Commerce. Florida Commerce contracts with the Florida Sports Foundation to guide, stimulate, and promote the sports industry in this state; to promote the participation of residents of this state in amateur athletic competitions; and to promote this state as a host for national and international amateur athletic competitions.





# Mission Statement

The Florida Sports Foundation, a 501(C)3 non-profit corporation, is the State of Florida's official sports promotion and development organization.

It assists Florida communities with securing, hosting, and retaining sports events and sports-related business that generates significant economic impact and sports tourism for the state through grant programs, legislative initiatives, and industry partner services, recognition, and development.

It also promotes and develops professional, amateur, recreational sports and physical fitness opportunities that produce a thriving Florida sports industry and environment.



# Core Areas



A photograph of two women standing on their respective stand-up paddleboards (SUPs) on a river. They are both wearing neon green athletic vests and dark caps. The woman on the left is wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt under her vest and has a pink paddle. The woman on the right is wearing a dark tank top under her vest and has a blue paddle. The number '21' is visible on the vest of the woman on the right. The background shows a lush, green riverbank with trees and a house in the distance. The water is calm with some ripples from the paddles.

# Program Results

2023-2024 Activity

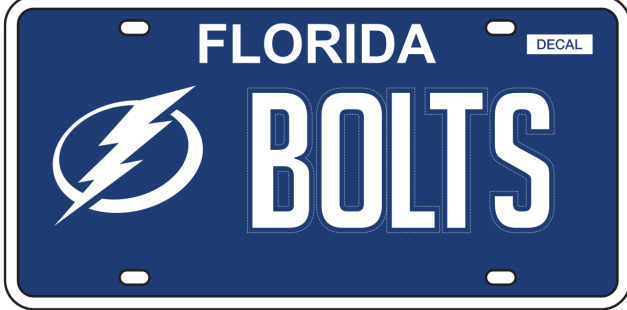
# FUNDING SOURCES

**Professional Sports Development Trust Fund (PSDTF)** – Established in 1995, appropriations derive from the sales of 10 professional sports teams' specialty license plates.

**State Economic Enhancement and Development Trust Fund (SEED)** – State appropriated funds to support amateur sports programs (Florida Senior Games and Sunshine State Games) and sports development grants.

Additional appropriations derive from the sales of USOC, NASCAR, and the USTA specialty license plates. Funds received vary based on sales.





# Sports Tourism

**Advance and cultivate sports and related industries to bolster their economic presence and impact in Florida.**



# Florida Sports Foundation Impact

In its 35th year of operation for FY 2023-2024

Total awarded in grants

**\$3,733,057**

Projected economic impact

**\$1,220,901,743**

Out-of-state visitors projected

**1,673,047**

# of partners granted

**28**

Total grants awarded

**193**





# Grants Awarded and Disbursed

In its 35th year of operation, FSF **awarded 193** sporting event grants totaling over **\$3,733,058** to **28** industry partners across Florida. These grants are projected to attract over **1,673,047**, out-of-state visitors, contributing a projected economic impact of over **\$1,220,901,743** to the state.

FSF **distributed** nearly **\$3,690,000** across **185** grants, drawing over **1,570,000** visitors and generating an economic impact of over **\$1,234,000,000** to Florida.

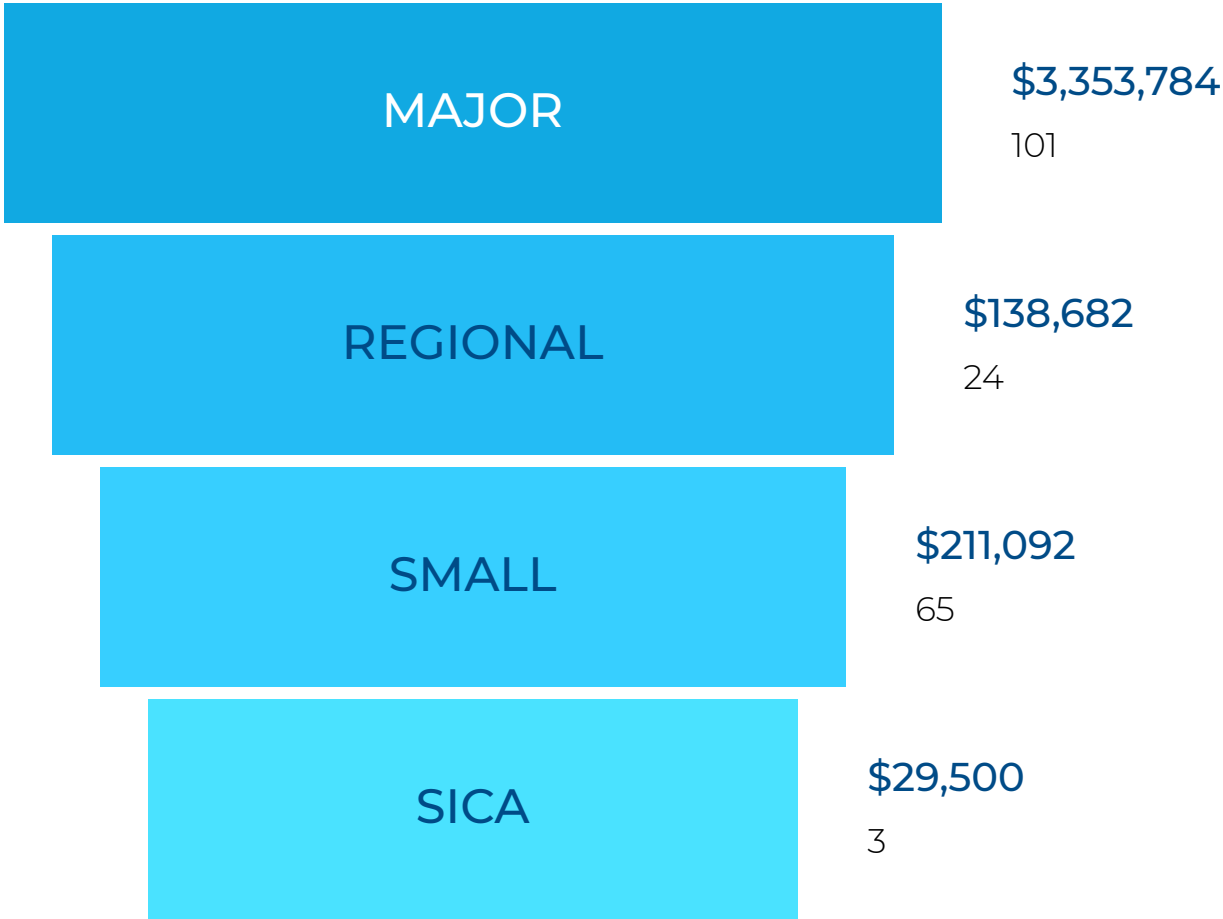


# Performance Standards Delivery

	Standard	FY 23-24 Actuals
Economic contributions to communities as a result of hosting Florida's Senior State Games and Sunshine State Games Championships	\$7,000,000	\$12,772,194
Number of participants (athletes and families) competing in and attending Florida's Senior State Games and Sunshine State Games Championships	20,000	33,973
Economic contributions from Florida Sports Foundation sponsored sporting event grants	\$300,000,000	\$1,234,021,823
Number of attendees at the sponsored grant events	650,000	1,569,958



# Grants Awarded By Type



**MAJOR:** generates more than \$5,000,000 in out-of-state economic impact

**REGIONAL:** generates more than \$500,000 in out-of-state economic impact

**SMALL:** limited to designated communities based on hotel occupancy and generates less than \$500,000 in out-of-state economic impact

**SICA:** designated to assist funding of conferences, trade shows and association meetings

# Amateur Athletics

Statewide program of amateur athletic competitions. Florida Senior Games (FSG) for athletes aged 50 and above and Sunshine State Games (SSG) for Florida athletes.







# Sunshine State Games

The Sunshine State Games celebrates its 45th Anniversary in 2024.



## 12 Sports

The traditional Sunshine State Games month of June features competition in 12 sports in various locations including Gainesville, Ocala, Palm Bay, Wesley Chapel, Fort Lauderdale and Polk County.



## Over 320,000 Athletes

Since 1980, the Sunshine State Games has facilitated participation for over 320,000 amateur athletes, including more than 6,800 in Florida in 2023. Many of these sports offer pathways to the Olympics.



## Over 2,000 Attendees

The Sunshine State Games events staff participated in the annual Children's Week event at the Florida Capitol on February 27, with more than 2,000 in attendance, to promote the Sunshine State Games.







**3,000**

ATHLETES

.....

**261**

FLORIDA CITIES REPRESENTED

.....

**20+**

SPORTS



“In all my years of being an athlete, which is about 10 now, the Senior Games is truly the pinnacle. It doesn’t matter who wins because we’re having fun doing it.”

**KATHY PETRILLO**  
CYCLIST, 2016 FSG  
FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE  
YEAR

“I love the Senior Games because I love the tribute to exercising and showcasing what people can do like (tennis player) Cheng Hung, at 89 and 90 years old.”

MICHELE BRANHAM  
DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS  
SECRETARY



# Sports Development

**Elevate Florida's sports tourism industry through strategic partnerships with Florida communities in order to strengthen Florida's position as a premier destination for sports tourism.**



# Sports Development

## Impact of State, National & International Focus

### International Conferences

- TEAMS EU London (June 2024)
- SportBIZ Miami (July 2024)
- Leaders In Sports London (October 2024)
- Host City Glasgow (November 2024)

### Partnerships in Progress

- USOPC and National Governing Bodies
- Los Angeles Olympic Games (LA28)
- Hungarian Olympic Committee

### Future Events

- International Cricket Council World Cup (Lauderhill, FL)
- International Teqvolley Championship (Sarasota, FL)
- FIFA 2025 Club World Cup (TBD)
- FIFA World Cup 2026 (Miami, FL)
  - 7 Events
  - One Bronze Medal Event
- World Athletics Cross Country Championship 2026 (Tallahassee, FL)



**COME PLAY  
IN FLORIDA**

[PLAYINFLORIDA.COM](http://PLAYINFLORIDA.COM)

# Sports Development

## Domestic Conferences

### Completed:

#### APRIL

- Sports ETA Women's Summit (Cleveland, OH)
- Sports ETA Annual Symposium (Portland, OR)

#### MAY

- Partners Day at Miami Formula 1 (Miami, FL)
- 2024 Annual Foundation Summit (Panama City Beach, FL)



### Future:

#### JUNE

- Florida Association of Counties (Orlando, FL)

#### JULY

- Destinations International Annual Conference (Tampa, FL)

#### AUGUST

- CONNECT Marketplace (Minneapolis, MN)
- Governors' Conference on Tourism (Tampa, FL)

#### SEPTEMBER

- TEAMS Sports Conference (Anaheim, CA)

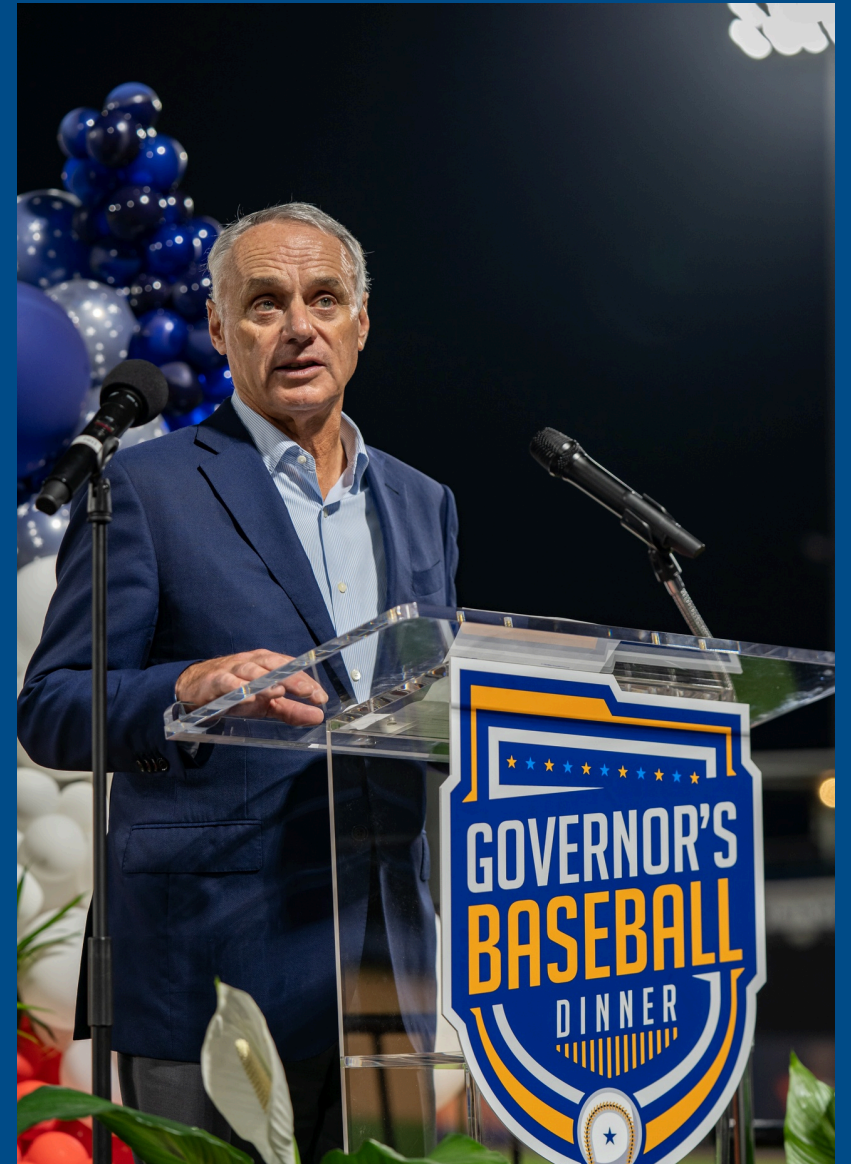
# Governor's Baseball Dinner

A celebration of Florida's 15 MLB spring training facilities and the launch of the Grapefruit League spring training season.



**"I always look forward to the Governor's Baseball Dinner because it's the beginning of something great, another baseball season."**

Rob Manfred  
Commissioner, MLB



# Legend Of The Game Award



2024 Recipient - Tino Martinez





# Program Guides



WINTER, SPRING 2023

# FLORIDA

FLORIDA'S PREMIER  
DESTINATIONS | GOLF RESORTS | COMMUNITIES



2024

## SPRING TRAINING

Guide to the Florida  
Grapefruit League



[www.FloridaGrapefruitLeague.com](http://www.FloridaGrapefruitLeague.com)

# Destination Partners

**Supporting and assisting local governments and communities in the development of or hosting of local amateur athletic events and competitions.**



# Destination Partners

- Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Bradenton Area Sports
- Citrus County Sports Development
- Clay County Board of Commissioners
- Columbia County Sports Commission
- Daytona Beach Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Destin-Fort Walton Beach
- Experience Florida's Sports Coast
- Experience Kissimmee Sports Commission
- Florida Citrus Sports & Events, Inc.
- Space Coast Office of Tourism
- Gainesville Sports Commission
- Greater Fort Lauderdale Sports
- Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Greater Orlando Sports Commission
- Visit Jacksonville
- Lee County Sports Development
- Naples, Marco Island, Everglades Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Ocala/Marion County Visitors & Convention Bureau
- Orlando North Seminole County Sports
- Orange Bowl Committee
- Palm Beach County Sports Commission
- Panama City Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Pensacola Sports
- Polk County Sports Marketing
- Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Bureau
- Visit Florida's Putnam County
- Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners
- Sarasota County Sports Commission
- St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra and the Beach CVB
- St. Pete Clearwater Sports Commission
- Visit Tallahassee Sports
- Tampa Bay Sports Commission
- Treasure Coast Sports Commission
- Visit Lake County
- Visit Orlando Sports
- Visit Sebring





# Citizen Wellness

**Foster and coordinate services and programs designed to contribute to the physical fitness of the citizens for Florida.**



# Pledge2Play Campaign

An outreach program designed to share the benefits of physical activity in youth and encourage and increase youth physical activity during the summer months.



## ACTIVITY TRACKER WEEKLY ACTIVITY SHEET

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

**Our goal is to get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day! Great job on keeping active and healthy!**

Day	Activity/Exercise	Duration (minutes)	Notes
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

Total Minutes for the Week: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's T-Shirt Size:  Small  Medium  Large  X-Large

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### FUN ACTIVITY IDEAS

Children should get at least 1 hour of physical activity daily, and preschoolers should avoid sitting still for more than 1 hour, except when sleeping. Engage in activities like walking, park play, swimming, biking, dancing, rollerskating, and sports such as soccer, kickball, basketball, and tennis. Indoor and outdoor games involving running, skipping, hopping, or jumping, as well as household tasks like cleaning and yard work, are also great options.

COME PLAY IN FLORIDA | FLORIDA HEALTH





# Future Planning

Strategic Plan



# Grants & Sports Tourism Industry

- 1 The Florida Sports Foundation will continue to assist Florida Industry partners by helping them grow their sports tourism through business development and servicing of existing partnerships
- 2 Implement a Sports Industry Leadership award to recognize exemplary sports tourism efforts of Florida Industry partners
- 3 **Expand and conduct the annual Florida Sports Summit and Florida Industry partner meeting**
  - Invite event rights holder to participate and provide networking opportunities with Florida's communities through the Summit or Sports Leadership conferences each year
  - Provide educational opportunities for Florida's Industry partners
  - Continue to grow the Florida Sports Summit to serve our Industry Partners and promote sports business in Florida's communities
  - Continue to review the digital platform for the Florida Venue Guide & Directory
- 4 The Florida Sports Foundation will conduct annual evaluations of the grant program to ensure it is up to date with industry standards and needs
- 5 Evaluate industry trends to identify opportunities for Industry Partners to be successful individually and collectively on a regional, national and international level
  - Cultivate partner success by utilizing available tools such as the Florida economic impact study and other national economic studies
- 6 **Identify International opportunities to develop and grow relationships with International Governing Bodies, the International Olympic Committee and sub-committees, international events holders and other relevant stakeholders**



# Sunshine State Games

## 1 Build relationships with National Governing Bodies

- Continue governing body relations and communications to keep the Sunshine State Games relevant to their programming
- Identify opportunities to utilize the Sunshine State Games to fulfill a need or bridge a gap in governing body programs
- Identify opportunities to assist the National and State Governing Bodies to fulfill their current sport development through Florida's Sunshine State Games

## 2 Develop Community Partner relationships

- Identify new community partners and explore relationships
- Educate potential host community partners on opportunities with Sunshine State Games
- Develop a youth health & wellness program in connection with Department of Education and Department of Health through sport and activity to compliment the Florida Sunshine Games and develop new athletes

## 3 Increase revenues of Sunshine State Games

- Evolve and grow the sponsorship program
- Increase state support
- Implement an e-commerce solution for event merchandise sales
- Increase entry revenues by evaluating market value, increasing participation and introducing more sports

## 4 Increase participation in Florida's Sunshine State Games while meeting budgetary goals

- Evaluate annual sports line-up and explore opportunities to add additional sports and new events
- Identify priority sports with the most growth potential in which to invest marketing resources
- Focus on a zero balance budget approach for direct event expenses and revenues
- Identify opportunities to expand the current Sunshine State Games potential market by evaluating sport divisions, events, formats, rules and residency requirements

# Florida Senior Games

## 1 Increase revenues of Florida Senior Games

- Evolve and grow the sponsorship program
- Increase state support
- Increase entry revenues by annually evaluating market value, increasing participation and introducing new sports and programming
- Implement e-commerce solution for merchandise sales

## 2 Increase participation in the Florida Senior Games program while meeting budgetary goals

- Evaluate addition of more local qualifiers across the state
- Work with Local Senior Games to promote participation at the local and state level and to assist them with providing quality events and competition
- Identify priority sports with the most growth potential in which to invest marketing resources
- Identify opportunities to expand the current Florida Senior Games potential market by evaluating sport divisions, events, formats, rules and qualifying opportunities from the local to state level
- Increase opportunities for earned and shared media exposure



# Specialty License Plates

## 1 Increase sales of professional license plates

- Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with partner charitable organizations
- Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with each professional team or league to set plate sales goals and strategies
- Establish and maintain collaborative relationship with bureau of issuance to improve process for specialty plate legislative requests, plate re-designs and use of the Florida Licensing on Wheels (FLOW) unit for on-site promotional events
- Maintain current plate owner loyalty through communication of granted events and non-profit initiatives funded via plate revenue
- Investigate opportunities to work with the Association of Florida Tax Collectors to maximize exposure of plate program
- Mandate marketing/promotion of specialty plate program at granted events
- Maintain knowledge of statutes and legislative policies involving the specialty plate program and share information annually with board of directors, leagues and Industry Partners
- Incorporate Olympic license plate messaging during Sunshine State Games and Florida Senior Games



# Leisure Sports

## 1 Florida's MLB Spring Training

- Evaluate the effectiveness of Florida Spring Training initiatives, such as the Florida Grapefruit League website and Spring Training guide
- Explore opportunities to grow advertising revenue from the Spring Training guide and website
- Expand marketing campaign utilizing website email database
- Work with MLB Teams and their Florida Spring Training homes to nurture the relationships
- Expand exposure of Florida Spring Training across national and regional media channels
- Establish a Spring Training annual celebration planning committee

## 2 Florida Golf

- Evaluate the partnership surrounding effectiveness of the Golf Guide and tradeshow initiatives
- Explore opportunities to update Florida Golf Guide format
- Investigate implementing a marketing campaign utilizing website email database and other media to increase exposure

## 3 Florida Fishing & Boating

- Evaluate the partnership surrounding effectiveness of the Fishing and Boating Guide and tradeshow initiatives
- Explore opportunities with Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Fishing Hall of Fame
- Investigate implementing marketing campaign utilizing website email database and other media to increase exposure

## 4 Work with peer organizations to identify and expand collaborative opportunities to promote Spring Training, Golf, Boating and Fishing in addition to new recreation / leisure sport markets that will drive visitors to Florida



# Marketing, Communications & Partnerships

## 1 Develop a communications plan to provide marketing outreach for each of FSF's core missions

- Market Florida as a sports tourism destination
- Promote participation in and growth of Florida's Sunshine State and Florida Senior Games
- Develop a consistent media presence that will highlight the achievements and successes of the FSF
- Research and compile statistics that help support the 5 core missions

## 2 Promote a consistent brand and message for the organization

## 3 Use media to enhance and explore ways to connect with our core audiences for each mission area:

- Sports Tourism Industry
- Florida Senior Games
- Sunshine State Games
- Professional and Olympic Tags
- Leisure Sports--MLB Spring Training , Golf, Fishing & Boating

## 4 Explore opportunities to improve digital presence including website, partner support and FSF publications

## 5 Increase Corporate Sponsor support

Introduce opportunities for current and new corporate sponsors

Add involvement at various levels, large and small

Tie in and involve our corporate sponsors to major events to attract and offer added benefits

## 6 Partner with state agencies to communicate benefits of healthy lifestyles and sports activity to Floridians

# FLORIDA STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 2018-2023: STRATEGY MAP

*\*AREAS APPLICABLE TO  
FLORIDA SPORTS  
FOUNDATION*

- **Objective 2 – Foster opportunities for prosperity for all Floridians**
  - **Objective 5 – Increase Florida’s attractiveness to workers, residents, and visitors**
- 
- Strategy 1 – Strengthen collaboration and alignment among state, regional, and local entities toward the state’s economic vision
  - Strategy 4 – Position Florida as a global hub for trade, visitors, talent, innovation, and investment
  - Strategy 24 – Support and sustain statewide and regional partnerships to accomplish Florida’s economic and quality of life
  - Strategy 26 – Invest in strategic and regional economic development priorities
  - Strategy 27 - Create and sustain vibrant, safe, and healthy communities that attract workers, residents, businesses, and visitors
  - Strategy 29 – Promote, develop, protect, and leverage Florida’s natural art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner





# Appendix



# Ethics Policy



## Employee Ethics Code

Revised 3/27/2024

### PURPOSE:

Florida Sports Foundation, Inc. ("FSF") employees are expected to maintain the highest ethical and legal standards in the conduct of FSF's business affairs. The intent of this *Employee Ethics Code* ("Code") is to convey ethical standards and expectations that each employee will conduct FSF business with integrity, comply with all applicable laws and regulations, and avoid any circumstances that would cast doubt on an FSF employee's ability to act with total objectivity and in FSF's best interests.

This Employee Ethics Code pertains specifically to FSF employees, however, references are also made to the ethics requirements of FSF Board Members, which all employees should be mindful of while performing their duties on behalf of FSF. This Employee Ethics Code is modeled after provisions of the Florida Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees within Chapter 112, Florida Statutes. And this Code is adopted in accordance with FSF's *Funding and Program Agreement* with the Florida Department of Commerce ("Commerce") Number SB-24-004 (S012) as it may be amended or supplemented from time to time.

### ETHICS CODE:

#### **A. Avoiding the Appearance of Impropriety**

Employees of FSF must only use the powers and resources of FSF to further FSF and the public's interest and not for their own or another's financial or personal benefit other than salaried compensation and employer-provided benefits.

Employees are expected to safeguard their ability to make objective, fair and impartial decisions, and therefore may not accept benefits of any sort under circumstances in which it could be inferred by a reasonable observer that the benefit was intended to influence a pending or future decision of theirs, or to reward a past decision. Employees should avoid any conduct (whether in the context of business, financial or social relationships) that might undermine the public trust, whether that conduct is unethical or lends itself to the appearance of ethical impropriety.

#### **B. Gifts Given to FSF Employees or Board Members**

1. An employee or Board member of FSF may not accept or receive food, beverages, lodging, entertainment, or gifts from:

- A tourist or economic development entity that receives revenue from a tax imposed pursuant to sections 125.0104 (tourist development tax), 125.0108 (tourist impact tax), or 212.0305 (convention development tax); or from
- Any person, vendor, or other entity, doing business with FSF or seeking to do business with FSF unless such food, beverage, lodging, entertainment, or gift is available to similarly situated members of the general public.

2. FSF may not expend public funds for any food, beverages, lodging, entertainment, or gifts to FSF employees, Board members, or employees of a tourist or economic development entity that receives revenue from a tax imposed pursuant to sections 125.0104 (tourist development tax), 125.0108 (tourist impact tax), or 212.0305 (convention development tax), Florida Statutes, unless authorized pursuant to section 112.061, Florida Statutes.

3. No employee of FSF, including an officer or agent, the president, or the chief executive officer, may receive public compensation for employment that exceeds the salary and benefits authorized to be paid to the Governor.

4. Any public payments of performance bonuses or severance pay to employees are prohibited unless specifically authorized by law. Should FSF use public payments for performance bonuses or severance pay the legal authorization must be provided to the Commerce Agreement Manager via email prior to any such payment.

5. FSF must comply with following per diem and travel expense provisions, in keeping with section 112.061, Florida Statutes:

- Board members and employees are entitled to receive reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses pursuant to s. 112.061, F.S. Such expenses must be paid out of funds of FSF; and
- FSF shall ensure that travel and expense reimbursements made to vendors are in accordance with a policy established by FSF. FSF's travel and expense policy must ensure that vendor reimbursements are made at the lowest possible cost necessary to ensure a reasonable level of service, comfort and security.

6. Gifts (regardless of value) received from personal friends in the ordinary course of friendship (including but not limited to birthday and/or anniversary gifts and gifts of hospitality), can be accepted by an employee, provided that any such personal friend is not:

- a person having a special pecuniary interest (either individually or through a corporation or organization) in a matter pending before FSF;

# Ethics Policy

- a person who (either individually or through a corporation or organization) is doing business with (providing goods or services to) FSF under contract or agreement; or
- a person who (either individually or through a corporation or organization) is seeking to do business with FSF.

7. Gifts (regardless of value) received that help defray the cost of attendance at events or receptions may be accepted by an employee, provided the employee's attendance at such event or reception is an appropriate exercise of his or her official duties and as long as the gift is not provided by a tourist or economic development entity that receives revenue from a tax imposed pursuant to sections 125.0104 (tourist development tax), 125.0108 (tourist impact tax), or 212.0305 (convention development tax) or a person, vendor, or other entity doing business with or seeking to do business with FSF, unless such food, beverage, lodging, entertainment, or gift is available to similarly situated members of the general public or appropriate payment is made.

8. Gifts associated with an FSF sponsored event or program, provided that the employee's attendance at such event or program is an appropriate exercise of his or her official duties.

9. Gifts (regardless of value) made to FSF or a Division thereof may be accepted by an employee on behalf of FSF, provided the President & CEO or their designee has approved such acceptance.

## What is a gift?

"Gift" is defined in section 112.312(12), Florida Statutes, to mean anything accepted by a person or on that person's behalf, whether directly or indirectly, for that person's benefit, and for which equal or greater consideration is not given within 90 days, including:

1. Real property.
2. The use of real property.
3. Tangible or intangible personal property.
4. The use of tangible or intangible personal property.
5. A preferential rate or terms on a debt, loan, goods, or services, which rate is below the customary rate and is not either a government rate available to all other similarly situated government employees or officials or a rate which is available to similarly situated members of the public by virtue of occupation, affiliation, age, religion, sex, or national origin.
6. Forgiveness of an indebtedness.
7. Transportation, other than that provided to a public officer or employee by an agency in relation to officially approved governmental business, lodging, or parking.
8. Food or beverage.
9. Membership dues.
10. Entrance fees, admission fees, or tickets to events, performances, or facilities.
11. Plants, flowers, or floral arrangements.

12. Services provided by persons pursuant to a professional license or certificate.
13. Other personal services for which a fee is normally charged by the person providing the services.
14. Any other similar service or thing having an attributable value not already provided for in this section.

## What is **NOT** a gift?

A "gift" does **NOT** include:

1. Salary, benefits, services, fees, commissions, gifts, or expenses associated primarily with the donee's employment, business, or service as an officer or director of a corporation or organization.
2. Except as provided in s. 112.31485, contributions or expenditures reported pursuant to chapter 106, contributions or expenditures reported pursuant to federal election law, campaign-related personal services provided without compensation by individuals volunteering their time, or any other contribution or expenditure by a political party or affiliated party committee.
3. An honorarium or an expense related to an honorarium event paid to a person or the person's spouse.
4. An award, plaque, certificate, or similar personalized item given in recognition of the donee's public, civic, charitable, or professional service.
5. An honorary membership in a service or fraternal organization presented merely as a courtesy by such organization.
6. The use of a public facility or public property, made available by a governmental agency, for a public purpose.
7. Transportation provided to a public officer or employee by an agency in relation to officially approved governmental business.
8. Gifts provided directly or indirectly by a state, regional, or national organization which promotes the exchange of ideas between, or the professional development of, governmental officials or employees, and whose membership is primarily composed of elected or appointed public officials or staff, to members of that organization or officials or staff of a governmental agency that is a member of that organization.

**NOTE: There is no gift received if the employee or Board member pays in advance or reimburses the person or entity providing the gift for the cost of the item.** Generally, this is measured as the cost of the item to the person providing it or the fair market value. While a membership fee required to use a golf course, tennis club, dining club or other private facility is not part of the reimbursable cost, the per ticket additional cost above the face value for seating at a skybox or other exclusive seating area at a sporting or theatrical venue is part of the reimbursable cost and must be included. Section 112.3148(7), of the Florida Statutes, and Rules 34-13.210 and 34.13.500, of the Florida Administrative Code, provide direction on how to value gifts and should be consulted when making payment for an event or item that otherwise would be prohibited absent payment of consideration. If in doubt about the appropriate amount of payment or consideration to provide, please consult with FSF's Chief Ethics Officer.

# Ethics Policy

## C. Other Ethical Requirements

As a matter of policy, all **employees** of FSF are subject to sections 112.313(1)-(8), and (10); and 112.3135, of the Florida Statutes (portions of Florida's Code of Ethics) and are considered to be public employees and FSF is considered to be their agency.

The relevant provisions of Florida's Code of Ethics that employees of FSF are subject to include the following:

- Employees are prohibited from soliciting or accepting anything of value, such as a gift, loan, reward, promise of future employment, favor, or service that is based on an understanding that their official action or judgment would be influenced by such gift.
- Employees and their spouses and minor children are prohibited from accepting any compensation, payment, or thing of value when they know, or with the exercise of reasonable care should know, that it is given to influence their official action.
- Employees are prohibited from corruptly using or attempting to use their official positions to obtain a special privilege for themselves or others.
- Employees are prohibited from disclosing or using information not available to the public and obtained by reason of their FSF position for the personal benefit of themselves or others.
- Employees acting in their official capacity are prohibited from directly or indirectly purchasing, renting, or leasing any realty, goods, or procuring contractual services for FSF from a business entity in which they, their spouse, or child, or any combination of them, has a material interest (owns more than a 5% interest) or serves as an officer or director. Also, employees acting in a private capacity are prohibited from renting, leasing, or selling any realty, goods, or services to FSF.
- Employees are prohibited from holding any employment or contract with any business entity or agency doing business with FSF. Employees are also prohibited from holding any employment or having a contractual relationship which will pose a conflict between their private interests and employment duties, or which will impede the full and faithful discharge of their employment duties.
- An employee who participates in the decision-making process involving a procurement, who influences the content of any specification or procurement standard, or who renders advice, investigation, or auditing, regarding FSF's contract for services, is prohibited from being employed by a person holding such a contract with FSF.
- Employees are prohibited from seeking for a relative any appointment, employment, promotion or advancement in the unit in which he/she is serving or over which he/she exercises jurisdiction or control.

- No employee may serve as a member of the FSF Board of Directors while employed by FSF.

**For further discussion of these provisions refer to Chapter 112, Part III, Florida Statutes.**

## D. Conflicts of Interest

FSF employees should avoid any situation that involves or may involve a conflict between their personal interests and the best interests of FSF. It is expected that all FSF employees will use good judgment, high ethical standards and honesty in all business dealings. A conflict of interest is any circumstance that could cast doubt on your ability to act objectively regarding FSF's interests, or any circumstance that benefits the employee to the detriment of FSF. This includes potential conflicts arising from activities of a spouse, partner, immediate family members or any other person with whom an FSF employee may have a personal relationship.

Any actions or interests that create even the appearance of conflict or impropriety fall within this Code and must be avoided.

In addition to the statutory code of ethics, examples of activities that FSF considers to be a potential conflict with FSF's best interests and that are specifically prohibited include, but are not limited to:

1. Ownership or any significant interest by an FSF employee or employee's immediate family (spouse, parent, child, or sibling) in any enterprise or organization that does or seeks to do business with FSF.
2. Acting in any capacity (such as employee, director, officer, partner, consultant, distributor, or agent) in any enterprise or organization that does or seeks to do business with FSF.
3. Using or attempting to use your position or any property or resource of FSF to develop outside business, employment or other personal interests.
4. Acting as a broker, finder, go-between or otherwise for the benefit of a third party in transactions involving or potentially involving FSF or its interests.
5. Use of FSF's name to lend weight or prestige to an employee's personal endorsement of a candidate or political party or other political cause or to the endorsement of products or services of another enterprise or organization. This Policy shall not prohibit an FSF employee from participating in approved projects with other organizations or enterprises through assigned FSF employee participation.

# Ethics Policy

6. Any other arrangements or circumstances, including family or other personal relationships, which might in any way dissuade the employee from acting in the best interests of FSF.

## **E. Political Endorsements and Lobbying**

FSF employees are prohibited from using their position with FSF, FSF's name, or any property or resource of FSF to:

- (1) Endorse any candidate for any elected public office; or
- (2) Make contributions to the campaign of any such candidate.

Please also keep in mind that FSF is prohibited from using state funds to lobby the Florida legislature, the judicial branch, or any state agency. This does not prohibit FSF from using state funds to pay for salaries, travel expenses, and per diem for full-time employees of FSF who may be required by Florida law to register as lobbyists to represent FSF before the state legislative or executive branches.

## **F. Notification**

Prior to engaging in an activity subject to this Policy, any conflict or potential conflict of interest must be immediately and fully disclosed to and approved by FSF through notification to, and consent of, the FSF associate's Senior Vice President who will discuss with Human Resources and the Chief Operating Officer.

## **G. Dual Employment**

No employee may have any on-going dual employment or dual compensation without prior approval from FSF's President & CEO and Chief Ethics Officer.

## **H. Application for Exemptions**

There may be unique and/or compelling circumstances warranting exceptions to and/or waivers from these requirements established as a matter of policy in certain individual cases. In those instances, prior approval of FSF's President & CEO with consultation of FSF's Chief Ethics Officer is required.

## **I. Training**

All employees are required to attend at least once annually ethics, public records, and sunshine law training provided by FSF.

## **J. Compliance**

Any violation of this Policy will subject the FSF employee to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. Any FSF employee having knowledge of any violation

of this Policy must promptly report such violation (See section K). Failure to report violations of this Policy will likewise subject an employee to discipline and even termination. Retaliation will not be tolerated against any FSF employee or third party who claims or reports a violation.

## **K. Reporting**

If you have any questions or would like to report a potential violation of this Code, please consult with the appropriate FSF Vice President who upon consultation with the FSF Chief Ethics Officer will advise on the matter in question.

Any employee who knowingly makes a false claim or report is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

# Ethics Policy

## ***Employee Ethics Code Acknowledgment Form***

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The Florida Sports Foundation *Employee Ethics Code* ("Code") provides important information about this organization and my ethical responsibilities as an employee of the organization, and I understand that as a condition of my employment I am to comply with the Code as outlined.

Since the information described in the Code is subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions may occur. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate any or all of this Code as written. Only the FSF President & CEO or his or her designee has the ability to authorize any revisions to this Code.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Code, and I understand it is my responsibility to read and comply with the Code and any revisions made to it. Should questions regarding appropriate behavior under this Code arise during the course of my employment, I will seek guidance from the appropriate FSF Vice President who upon consultation with the FSF Chief Ethics Officer will advise on how to handle the matter in question.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Printed Name

# Letter of Attestation



August 1, 2024

Ms. Ava Dillard  
Department of Economic Opportunity  
107 E. Madison St., MSC-80  
Caldwell Building  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

**Re: Direct-Support Organization Report – Pursuant to s. 20.058 F.S.**

I hereby certify under penalty of perjury, that the Florida Sports Foundation, with exception to 20.058 (1)(f), has complied with s. 20.058(4), F.S.

If you require additional information, please contact me at (850) 577-7212 or [jhightower@playinflorida.com](mailto:jhightower@playinflorida.com).

Sincerely,

*Jacqueline*

Jacqueline D. Hightower  
**Vice President, Operations**

# IRS Form 990

**From:** [Conrad, Ashley](#)  
**To:** [Jacqueline Hightower](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] - FW: V-Mail from +18506172640 (850) 617-2640 to Jacqueline Hightower 212  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 23, 2024 1:40:28 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

Hi Jacqueline,

I reached out to Matt about the voicemail you received, and he asked me to please let you know that the audit has not yet been completed due to the dissolution of EFI. The department is doing everything possible to finalize the audit. If I can provide anymore assistance, please let me know.

Thank you,  
Ashley

---

**From:** Jacqueline Hightower <[jhightower@playinflorida.com](mailto:jhightower@playinflorida.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 22, 2024 4:21 PM  
**To:** Conrad, Ashley <[Ashley.conrad@commerce.fl.gov](mailto:Ashley.conrad@commerce.fl.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] - FW: V-Mail from +18506172640 (850) 617-2640 to Jacqueline Hightower 212

Ashley,

Thanks for checking into this for us.



Jacqueline D. Hightower  
Vice President, Operations  
Florida Sports Foundation  
o: 850.577.7212 m: 850.322.4992  
a: 1203 Governors Square Blvd., Suite 300  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
e: [jhightower@playinflorida.com](mailto:jhightower@playinflorida.com)  
w: [playinflorida.com](http://playinflorida.com)



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**From:** [support@vergevoip.com](mailto:support@vergevoip.com) <[support@vergevoip.com](mailto:support@vergevoip.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 22, 2024 2:51 PM  
**To:** Jacqueline Hightower <[jhightower@playinflorida.com](mailto:jhightower@playinflorida.com)>  
**Subject:** V-Mail from +18506172640 (850) 617-2640 to Jacqueline Hightower 212