

SMALL BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM SARASOTA COUNTY



TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE SMALL BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

This booklet is intended to guide companies through the landscape of business assistance that exists in Sarasota County. There are a myriad of local organizations whose core missions are to help local businesses grow through the provision of workforce assistance, consulting services, regulatory assistance, industry expertise, networking, various grants, and incentives.

This guide will highlight these organizations, with explanations of their purpose, programs and means of contact. Any of the organizations in this guide are well equipped to handle your needs in their specific area, as well as help you integrate with any of the other providers that can deliver value. Sarasota County values our businesses, and strives to contribute to their success through this network of providers.

CHAMBERS & BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

Networking, community integration, training

Downtown Sarasota Alliance	3
Gulf Coast CEO Forum	4
Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance	5
Longboat Key Chamber of Commerce	6
North Port Chamber of Commerce	7
Sarasota-Manatee Manufacturers Association	8
The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce	9
Venice Area Chamber of Commerce	10

BUSINESS EDUCATION RESOURCES

Foundation for Financial Education	11
Green Business Partnership	12

FINANCING

Access to capital

Bridge Angel Investors	13
Florida First Capital Finance Corporation	14

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT/ASSISTANCE

Find, train, upskill employees

CareerEdge Funders Collaborative	15
CareerSource Suncoast	16
SCF Workforce Solutions	17

HIGHER EDUCATION

Business research and collaboration, internships

Keiser University	18
New College of Florida	19
Suncoast Technical College	20
University of Florida Innovation Station	21
University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee	22

GROWTH ASSISTANCE

Consulting, export assistance, grants, incentives, mentoring, regulatory assistance, rapid permitting, small business loans

EDC of Sarasota County	23
Enterprise Florida	24
FloridaMakes	25
Florida High Tech Corridor	26
Florida Virtual Entrepreneurial Center	27
GrowFL	28
SCORE	29
Small Business Development Center	30



MISSION

To provide a forum and build community amongst the stakeholders of Sarasota's Downtown Districts.

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DESCRIPTION

The Downtown Sarasota Alliance is an alliance of downtown residents, merchants, businesses and owners of business properties all working together for a vibrant and thriving Downtown Sarasota community.

DSAsarasota.com is the site to visit frequently for downtown updates on parking, download the map, weekly events, the popular Friday Night Walks, shopping, dining, art galleries, and services in our downtown districts, and our best in Florida Farmers Market! It is the DSA's mission to make Sarasota the best city in America to live, work, visit and play! We encourage everyone to inspired, get active and get downtown to enjoy our wonderful city.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

- Merchant Support
- Banner Program
- Friday Night Walks
- City Guide
- Howard Alan Special Events
- Speaker Events

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CONTACT

Administrative Manager

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Sarasota FL 34236

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www.dsasarasota.com



MISSION

To be the premier organization for entrepreneurial Chief Executive Officers in the Gulf Coast area of Southwest Florida.

DESCRIPTION

The Forum's foundation is built upon its ability to build relationships, generate ideas, and formulate solutions. All three components are focused on the management and growth of the members' businesses. The CEO Forum is comprised of CEO's from entities with a minimum of 10 employees and annual revenues exceeding \$1.5 million.

With a focus on business leadership, the Gulf Coast CEO Forum. The need for second-stage companies to exchange information is critical to the learning curve of the CEO in charge.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

The Gulf Coast CEO Forum provides a comprehensive yearly event schedule devoted to cultivating Relationships, Ideas and Solutions.

- **Monthly Breakfast Meetings** feature a dynamic speaker and presentation with actionable takeaways on leadership, management, trending national topics and business performance.

NOT YOUR AVERAGE NETWORKING

- **Social Events** are part of our regular programming, designed to keep you connected to your fellow members in a fun atmosphere with no solicitation.

LEADERSHIP SECRET WEAPON

- **Roundtables** provide a confidential environment for members of non-competing industries to ask advice, tackle hard topics and glean ideas to keep their companies competitive. After all, it shouldn't be lonely at the top.
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CONTACT

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Executive Director

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MISSION

To Connect, Educate, and Strengthen the business community in the Lakewood Ranch Region.

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DESCRIPTION

Since 2005, the Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance has served the Lakewood Ranch business community as the go-to membership organization for companies to network and gain professional and personal growth. Our tagline, “The Power of Connection,” comes across in everything we do. From connecting you and your business to potential clients, to connecting you with the tools and resources you need to grow your business.

Today, we work with over 700 member businesses and 2,500 business professionals across a diverse range of industries, across Manatee and Sarasota Counties, and beyond.

A driving force behind economic advancement in the region, the LWRBA strengthens the business community in Lakewood Ranch by promoting business growth and advocating on behalf of member businesses. With over 100 events and programs each year, the Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance provides opportunity to connect with other member professionals to help you grow your business. Additionally, the Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance’s educational programs equip professionals with the knowledge and tools needed to take their careers and businesses to the next level.

SERVICES/BENEFITS

- Community Engagement - Alliance Gives Back!
 - Young Leaders Alliance
 - Executive Academy
 - East Meets West Expo
 - LWR Block Party
 - Events – CEO Rounds, Alliance LEADS, Lunch Speaker series, Monthly Social and The Sandies
-

CONTACT

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MISSION

To promote an environment that enhances business opportunities for members and maintains Longboat Key as a premier island community.

DESCRIPTION

The Longboat Key Chamber of Commerce was incorporated in May 1958 and has 330 members. The Chamber strives to make Longboat Key, Lido Key and St. Armands Key great places to do business while respecting the residential character of the keys. Tourism is the Chamber's main business, and besides being the information center of the islands and providing networking opportunities for its members, the Chamber seeks ways to support the community.

The Longboat Key Chamber advances the general welfare and prosperity of the LBK area so that its citizens and all areas of the business community shall prosper. Emphasis is given to the economic, civic, commercial environmental, cultural and educational interests of the area.

The Longboat Key Chamber's Official Visitors Guide and Business Directory is the most comprehensive source for all your vacation and business needs. It includes a complete Chamber member list of area restaurants, shopping, local businesses and accommodations for visitors.

SERVICES/BENEFITS

- Networking
 - Education
 - Business Assistance
 - Advocacy
 - Marketing
 - Destination Advertising
 - Tourism
 - Special Events
-

CONTACT

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MISSION

The mission of the North Port Area Chamber of Commerce is to promote and encourage business prosperity and to enhance economic development through advocacy, engagement and cooperation.

DESCRIPTION

The North Port Area Chamber of Commerce is organized to advance the general welfare and prosperity of the North Port area so that its citizens and all areas of its business community shall prosper.

The Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit organization designed to meet the needs of our business community, which in turn will benefit businesses, organizations, and individuals who are committed to our mission of promoting and encouraging business prosperity and to enhance economic development through advocacy, engagement and cooperation.

The North Port Area Chamber of Commerce believes in “Business and Community Growing Together”; a vibrant and successful business and happy community. To this end, the Chamber hosts several community events throughout the year, including the Annual Golf Tournament, Annual Business to Business Expo, Annual Business and Community Expo, and ribbon cuttings to welcome new businesses to North Port.

SERVICES/BENEFITS

- Breakfast Club Networking
 - Business After Hours
 - Networking @ Noon
 - Ribbon Cuttings
 - Lunch & Learn Workshops
 - Business & Community Expo
 - Business to Business Expo
 - Job & Career Fair
 - Leadership North Port
 - Entrepreneurial Academy
-

CONTACT

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MISSION

Create an environment where manufacturing can thrive.

DESCRIPTION

Founded in 1971, SAMA is raising the standard of living, and improving quality of life in Sarasota and Manatee counties through the advancement of manufacturing. Members include Manufacturers and Associates who provide services to help our manufacturers be more successful.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

SAMA – the number one resource for manufacturers in Sarasota and Manatee Counties for 48 years, helping members through:

ADVOCACY

- Represent manufacturers on the state and local legislative issues that impact our businesses and bottom lines, including:
 - The repeal of the Tangible Personal Property Tax
 - The elimination of the Florida Use Tax
- Build a collective understanding of manufacturing and its role in the community.
- Provide resources, including data, events and media outreach to amplify our voice.
- Focus on the differentiators, i.e. higher average wage than most leading industries, including tourism and retail.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Work closely with Manatee Technical College and Sarasota Technical College to create training programs that will prepare graduates for careers in manufacturing.
- Participate in educational round table discussions.

NETWORKING

- Discuss “Best Practices” with other manufacturers.
- Educational events with expert-driven content.
- Plant tours of local manufacturers.

BUSINESS ADVISING

- Free FloridaMakes business evaluations.
 - Discounted rates on FloridaMakes third-party services.
 - Create customized training tools.
-

CONTACT

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www.sama-fl.com



MISSION

The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce works to cultivate Sarasota's prosperity and quality of life through our member businesses.

DESCRIPTION

The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce's dynamic group of 1,200 member companies and organizations recognize the value of working together to accomplish what no single member could hope to achieve individually. Using our members' collective vision, resources and energy, we work to maintain a healthy environment in which our community can grow and prosper.

The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce (GSCC) is a major force in our community's economic prosperity and outstanding lifestyle. An award-winning not-for-profit membership organization, The Chamber provides the leadership to achieve a diverse balanced economy that enhances the quality of living and working in greater Sarasota.

The GSCC strives to keep programs current and responsive to the demands of Sarasota's modern business climate. In our continuously evolving marketplace, The Chamber is a bridge that links businesses, organizations and residents together with innovative programs that strengthen Sarasota's long-term economic vitality, business success, job creation and quality of life. By being a partner to our businesses we work to connect, promote, and support our members with opportunities to grow.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

- YPG - Young Professionals Group
 - Leadership Sarasota
 - Engage Sarasota
 - Youth Leadership
 - CareerEdge Funders Collaborative
-

CONTACT

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President/CEO

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www.sarasotachamber.com



MISSION

Promoting business growth and success since 1925.
The Venice Area Chamber of Commerce believes in creating a dynamic environment for a thriving, vibrant and prosperous business community for the greater Venice Area.

DESCRIPTION

The Venice Area Chamber of Commerce is a 1,000+ member business organization reaching over 35,000 employees. Also with our partnership with Visit Sarasota County, we are now an Official Visitor Center.

SERVICES/BENEFITS

- Biz Tips
- Business of the Year
- Business Showcase
- CEO Roundtable
- Focus Forward Forum
- Focus on Venice
- Leadership Venice
- PowerBites
- Venice Area Young Professionals
- Women Empowering Women

CONTACT

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President & CEO

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Venice, FL 34285

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Phone: 941.488.2236

www.venicechamber.com



MISSION

To promote financial literacy.

DESCRIPTION

The Foundation for Financial Education is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to providing free educational resources to the public. We are partnering with the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota to provide free classes throughout our community. The first chapter began in Washington D.C. and has spread throughout the country as we expand on the importance of Financial Wellness.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

The Foundation for Financial Education is available to assist companies of all sizes and scopes. All our services are free of charge. We teach one hour classes over various financial and economic topics to employees. This is not only beneficial to the employee, but to the employer as we, as it helps with employee retention in this competitive market. Classes offered include:

- Social Security for Beginners
 - Advanced Social Security
 - Retirement Planning
 - Financial Fitness
 - Taxes and the IRS
 - Planned Giving
 - Medicare
 - Long-term Planning
 - 10 Steps to Financial Freedom
 - Estate Planning
 - Financial Pitfalls
 - Improving Your Credit
 - Introduction to Real Estate
-

CONTACT

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Director

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www.f3eonline.org



MISSION

To provide guidance, strategies and resources for Sarasota County businesses to operate in an environmentally responsible manner.

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DESCRIPTION

The Green Business Partnership is open to all businesses in Sarasota County. Certified Green Business Partners are recognized as environmental leaders in our community. Green Business Partners pledge to demonstrate their environmental stewardship by reducing waste and conserving natural resources, and by operating an environmentally responsible business. More than 250 businesses have earned certification.

Program certification includes an on-site verification of reduction, reuse and conservation practices in:

- Business Operations
- Solid Waste Management
- Recycling
- Energy and Water Consumption

SERVICES/BENEFITS

Green business partners receive the following benefits by participating in the program.

- Official Logo Usage and Certificate
 - Green Business Website Business Listing
 - Free Waste and Energy Assessments
 - Media Exposure
 - Cost Savings
 - Technical Assistance
 - Increased Productivity
 - Community Recognition
 - Networking Opportunities
-

CONTACT

Green Business Partnership Program
Sarasota County UF/IFAS Extension and Sustainability
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www.scgov.net

Keyword: Green Business



MISSION

Fund and mentor primarily early-stage startups in the Sarasota-Manatee region and throughout Florida.

DESCRIPTION

Bridge Angel Investors is a group of private, qualified investors who reside in the Sarasota-Manatee area funding startups from across Florida. The reason is simple: Florida is one of the most attractive states for both investors and startups. It is the mecca for wealthy retirees with successful careers as executives and investors who want to make a social impact by investing and mentoring young startups.

The data supports this. According to a Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council Florida is the fifth best state to start a business. Other reports cite the growing rise of angel funds, incubators, top universities, low cost of living and, of course, the weather. And the data just keeps getting better. Inc.com reported that 340 of its 2018 Inc. 5000 list of fastest growing private companies are located in Florida.

The outlook is also promising for young entrepreneurs, especially in the Sarasota-Manatee region. According to MoneyRates.com, they topped the list in 2017 as the best city in Florida to start their own business ventures. In June, 2019, Sarasota was recognized as the #2 Best Small City to Start a Small Business in a study conducted by Verizon.

For these reasons, Bridge Angel Investors has become an important part of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, playing its part to co-create wealth for its members and for the economy as a whole.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

Bridge's members are typically retired Fortune 500 senior executives and successful entrepreneurs. They can be new to investing or long-time investors. For this reason, Bridge provides educational seminars for its members on a wide variety of topics related to angel investing, an asset class of its own. Topics include best methods for screening, conducting due diligence, defining term sheets and quantifying the risks versus Return on Investment. For startups requesting to pitch to Bridge, mentoring and feedback are also offered to help startups be successful, if not in the short term then in the longer term. In order to fulfill that purpose, Bridge will provide feedback to the startups during the pre-funding screening and due diligence phases and mentoring post-funding. Even for startups not chosen to move forward to the next phase of due diligence, specific reasons are given and they are encouraged to return once they have worked on their respective issues. For startups that are funded, Bridge members will hold a Board seat or take on a role on the company's Advisory Board to continue to guide them on a path to success.

CONTACT

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Executive Director

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www.bridgeangelinvestors.com

MISSION

As a federally regulated Certified Development Company (CDC), its primary mission is economic development and job creation throughout Florida and currently parts of South Alabama and Georgia.

DESCRIPTION

Founded by the State of Florida in 1983 and licensed since 1984 by the Small Business Administration (SBA) as Florida's Original Statewide Certified Development Company. Florida First Capital Finance Corporation (FFFC) was voluntarily privatized in 1997 and today operates as a fully self-supporting nonprofit organization.

Florida First Capital is chartered for the primary purpose of advancing the economic development and general welfare of the citizens of Florida by promoting and assisting the growth and development of small business concerns within the state. Florida First Capital has helped thousands of clients achieve their small business dreams through the SBA 504 Loan Program.

Florida First Capital strives to make the entire loan process as helpful, quick and easy as us. You can count on our staff to deliver the best and most complete service the industry has to offer.

Whether you are expanding, remodeling, converting, refinancing or just starting out, with Florida First Capital as your trusted SBA 504 lender, you'll spend less time worrying about your loan and more time doing what you do best – running your small business, creating jobs and supporting the economy.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

- Florida First Capital carries out its work through the administration of various government and private small business capital access programs. Most significant of these is the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 Loan Program.
- Under the 504 Loan Program, Florida First Capital partners with banks, credit unions and other private-sector lenders to provide the state's small businesses with access to fixed-rate and long-term financing for the purchase of owner-occupied commercial real estate and/or heavy duty machinery and equipment, all at low down payments and below-market interest rates.

CONTACT

William A. Wilson, CCIM, CFP®,
Business Development Officer

Serving the communities of Bradenton to Naples

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www.fffc.com

MISSION

CareerEdge Funders Collaborative's mission is to provide an exceptional labor force to the region's growing industries by leveraging community assets and forming high-performing workforce partnerships.

DESCRIPTION

CareerEdge Funders Collaborative, a workforce initiative of The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce, strives to understand employer needs, designing a strategy to address needs while fueling economic growth for employers, workers and educators. Target industries include: healthcare, manufacturing, construction trades, TDL and insurance.

CareerEdge was designed to work on both sides of the labor market – the demand side and the supply side – as well as among intermediary organizations, such as higher education institutions, in order to fuel the pipeline of skilled labor needed by the region's employers.

Two of the most tangible goals are to help low-skill/low-wage workers advance into higher-skill/higher-wage careers, while providing employers with the skilled workers they need to accelerate growth.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

CareerEdge Funders Collaborative uses a formal process to develop its partnership strategy by:

- Drawing on labor market information and other economic insight.
 - Engaging key stakeholders in the region.
 - Identifying the industry sector that has employment and advancement for workers in our region.
 - Generating system change by having a well-articulated strategy for generating change in public policy, institutional behavior and job quality.
 - Employer led industry partnerships based on market demand.
 - Serving under employed and middle skilled individuals by creating upward mobility opportunities.
-

CONTACT

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CareerEdge & Education Initiatives

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www.careeredgefunders.org



MISSION

To recruit, train, and retain talent for employers on the Suncoast.

DESCRIPTION

CareerSource Suncoast is a private, non-profit corporation with a Board of Directors, consisting of private business, economic development and education representatives, community and state agencies, and elected officials. Members of the board represent the diversity of businesses, organizations and trades that operate in Manatee and Sarasota counties. Our primary focus is to help businesses grow by providing workforce solutions for talent recruitment and development, and helping job seekers and workers manage their careers.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

CareerSource Suncoast offers a variety of no-fee and for-fee services to assist employers in recruiting, training, and retaining the workforce they need for the 21st Century.

RECRUITING

- Job Postings at www.employflorida.com
- Job Seeker Referrals
- Labor Market Information
- Onsite Hiring Events
- Drug and Background Testing
- Discounted Job Advertisements
- Job Fairs

TRAINING

- Connections to all local colleges and schools
- On-the-Job Training Grants to fill future openings
- Employed Worker Training Grants, reimbursing costs for existing employees to get new credentials or certificates
- Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor
- HR and Benefits Services
- Workforce Training Resources
- State of Jobs Conference
- Skills Assessments

RETENTION

- Incumbent Worker Training Grants
- Organizational Engagement Survey
- State of Talent Conference

THRIVE

A Suncoast based business accelerator. It supports the regional entrepreneurial community with flexible and affordable workspace, tech-centric tools, and skill development resources.

CONTACT

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Director of Business and Economic Development
3660 North Washington Boulevard, Sarasota, Florida 34234

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www.careersourcesuncoast.com



MISSION

State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota, guided by measurable standards of institutional excellence, provides engaging and accessible learning environments that result in student success and community prosperity.

DESCRIPTION

Workforce Solutions serves area business, industry and government by helping increase productivity and competitive advantage with staff development provided through quality training at an affordable price in areas such as leadership/management skills, software proficiency, manufacturing certifications, customer service, online courses and more. Flexibility is afforded through the availability of daytime, evening or Saturday scheduling either at your company site or at one of SCF's four locations in Bradenton, Venice, Lakewood Ranch or downtown Sarasota.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

Workforce Solutions partners with local and state agencies to obtain grant funding, which may cover some or all of the cost of training depending on the program. Such training includes:

RECRUITING

- Effective communication, conflict management, personality assessments, managing change, difficult conversations, emotional intelligence, problem solving/decision making, customer service, sexual harassment, sales, time management, facilitating successful meetings, teambuilding, diversity, coaching, motivating employees, generations at work, etc.

TECHNOLOGY

- Excel, Word, Outlook, PowerPoint, Access, Absolute Beginner, MS Project, InDesign, QuickBooks, netiquette, powerful presentations, social media, etc.

MANUFACTURING

- Automated systems troubleshooting, MSSC CPT, MSSC CLT, CPIM, Kaizen boards, LEAN, OSHA 30, PLC basics, Six Sigma, etc.

LANGUAGE

- Business writing, grammar review, workplace English, workplace Spanish, public speaking, etc.

OTHER

- Keynote speakers, organizational development, staff retreats, employee coaching, financials for the non-financial manager, parliamentary procedures, active shooter, etc.
-

CONTACT

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Sarasota, FL 34240

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www.scf.edu



MISSION

Keiser University is a regionally accredited private career university that provides educational programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels for a diverse student body in traditional, nontraditional and online delivery formats. The main campus is located in Fort Lauderdale, with campuses located throughout the State of Florida and internationally. Through quality teaching, learning, and research, the university is committed to provide students with opportunities to develop the knowledge, understanding, and skills necessary for successful employment. Inherent in the Mission is service to the community. This service includes community partnerships, involvement with various constituencies and various continuing education programs.

DESCRIPTION

Keiser University's goal is to develop career prepared individuals by providing an educational program that produce employable, skilled, educated, and responsible future citizens. Consequently, Keiser University students are prepared to provide professional, technical and marketable skills necessary to meet the projected needs of their communities. Inherent in the goals established for Keiser University is the belief that learning takes place through multiple delivery methods and in various settings. For this reason, Keiser University curricula are flexible, individualized, experiential, and instructional, and are structured in a sequential and cumulative fashion.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

Regionally accredited by SACS Commission on Colleges as a level VI University, offering Associates, Bachelors, Master's, and Doctoral degrees, Keiser University offers degrees in the following disciplines:

- Business Administration
- Technology
- Law Enforcement Operations
- Paralegal and Legal Studies
- HealthCare

CONTACT

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Phone: 941.907.3900

www.keiseruniversity.edu

MISSION

As Florida's residential public honors college, New College of Florida prepares intellectually curious students for lives of great achievement.

DESCRIPTION

With a focus on transferable soft skill development in addition to cutting edge technical skills, New College students are fearless learners who embrace new challenges, critically analyze problems to develop innovative solutions, and persist to achieve goals. The Princeton Review named New College one of its 50 Colleges that Create Futures. The New College of Florida's Center for Career Engagement and Opportunity provides employers customized just-in-time recruitment consultation and services to source talented students needed to meet workforce needs including part-time, internship, and full-time roles.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Undergraduate programs:

- **Natural Sciences** including Computer Science, Applied Mathematics, Statistics, Marine Biology, Environmental Studies, Biology, Physics, and Chemistry.
- **Social Sciences** including Economics, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, History, and Anthropology.

- **Humanities** including Chinese, Russian, French, German, Spanish, Art, Art History, English, Music, Philosophy, Classics, International Studies, and Religion.

Graduate program:

- **Data Science**

RECRUITMENT SERVICES

Through the Center for Career Engagement and Opportunity, New College offers a variety of free or low-fee services to assist employers with connecting with students:

- Personalized Recruitment Consultation including developing job descriptions, recruiting strategies, interfacing with faculty and academic programs, communicating an employment brand, and developing an internship program.
- Job Postings and Applicant Tracking at joinhandshake.com
- Career Fairs and Networking Events
- Information Tabling and Presentations
- Campus Interviewing

CONTACT

Dwayne Peterson,
Director, New College of Florida Center for Career
Engagement and Opportunity

5800 Bay Shore Road, Sarasota, FL 34243

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Phone: 941.487.5002

www.ncf.edu/ceo



MISSION

Suncoast Technical College provides quality technical education to meet workforce development and community needs.

DESCRIPTION

Suncoast Technical College is a multi-faceted postsecondary institution offering courses to adults and high school students in our community. We offer day and evening classes in over 40 technical programs that focus on competencies and outcomes driven by local workforce needs. STC students also have an opportunity to enroll in academic programs that include Adult Basic Education, Adult High School, Adult and Community Enrichment, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and GED® Preparation.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

CAREER CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

STC “Career in a Year” Programs offer professional training and industry certifications in high skill, wage, and in-demand careers.

- Career Counselors
- Financial Aid Counselors
- Certification Testing Center
- Job Placement Services

COMMUNITY WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIPS

STC partners with a variety of organizations and businesses to offer unique programs to fulfill community workforce needs.

- Two Generation Program
- Apprenticeships
- Internships
- Career Express Programs

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

- Sarasota Campus
 - North Port Branch
 - Newtown Branch
 - Alta Vista Branch
-

CONTACT

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www.suncoast.edu

MISSION

The Innovation Station mission connects region's industry to the UF College of Engineering with the goal of economic development through expertise, research, technology, talent and workforce development.

DESCRIPTION

The UF Innovation Station Sarasota County is an extension of the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering. Its primary goal is to extend engineering resources into the community to provide economic impact and workforce development to Florida companies, communities and citizens. UF Development services to Florida industry facilitate product and project development and technology commercialization.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

- **Talent and Technology Pipeline:** Key success drivers in the 21st-century economy include access to a robust engineering research engine, a talent pipeline to faculty experts, and opportunities to recruit interns and employees into the region who contribute to engineering leadership and innovation

- **Industry Engagement:** Access to faculty and facilities of a world-class research university gives startups-to-large high-tech companies the ability to attract funding, expand process and product development, prototype new ideas and expedite technology commercialization.
- **Workforce Development:** With the expansion of high-tech, high wage jobs, Florida is becoming a nexus for international technological leadership. Through distance learning and workforce development, citizens can advance their careers and contribute to the growth of the state's innovation economy.
- **K-12 Initiatives:** Exposure and participation in targeted engineering outreach programs encourages bright young minds to become the technology leaders of tomorrow and serve as role models for future generations.

CONTACT

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www.eng.ufl.edu/sarasota

MISSION

The University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee provides high quality bachelor's and graduate-level education and scholarly activity in a personalized learning community that prepares successful leaders and responsible citizens.

DESCRIPTION

The Business and Education Connection Network (BECN) provides a single university point of contact for current and new community partners. Our mission is to establish and maintain relationships with local organizations and businesses, linking them with the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee in order to identify and advance mutually-beneficial goals. USFSM is a recognized leader in workforce excellence and is the recipient of the 2019 CareerSource Suncoast Education Partner of the Year award.

SERVICES/BENEFITS

- Internships
 - Student Job Shadowing
 - Career-focused Field Trips
 - Student Mentoring Program
 - Corporate Training and Professional Education
 - Student Focus Groups
 - Consulting
-

CONTACT

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Director of Business Outreach and Community Engagement

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MISSION

To grow, diversify, and sustain the economy of Sarasota County while enhancing our unique, natural and cultural environment.

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DESCRIPTION

The Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County is a public-private partnership focused on growing existing businesses and strategically diversifying the economy of Sarasota County. It assists new and existing businesses by providing confidential project management, rapid permitting, building/site review, market research, workforce assistance, incentives/financing, and export assistance.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

The Economic Development Corporation is available to assist companies of all sizes and scope. All EDC services are free of charge. The EDC's Business Development Services include:

EXPANSION ASSISTANCE

- Building and Site Review
- Market Research
- Confidential Project Management

WORKFORCE ASSISTANCE

- Labor Market Research
- Customized Training
- Training Grants

EXPORTING ASSISTANCE

- Export Training
- Trade Missions
- Strategy Advising

FINANCING AND INCENTIVES

- State of Florida Incentives
- Sarasota County Incentives
- Small Business Innovation Research
- SBA Business Loans
- Traditional Commercial Financing

SARASOTA COUNTY INCENTIVES PROGRAMS

- Ad Valorem Tax Exemption
 - Mobility Fee Mitigation
 - Economic Development Incentive Fund
 - Rapid Permitting Program (SMART)
-

CONTACT

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MISSION

To expand and diversify the state's economy through job creation.

DESCRIPTION

Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI) is a public-private partnership between Florida's business and government leaders and is the principal economic development organization for Florida. In pursuit of its mission, EFI works closely with a statewide network of economic development partners and is funded both by the State of Florida and by private-sector businesses.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

- **Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund** program provides an incentive for target industries to locate new facilities in Florida or to expand existing facilities in Florida. The program provides tax refunds of \$3,000 per new job created. Higher awards are available to companies paying very high wages, operating within a designated high impact sector, or meeting other criteria.
- **Capital Investment Tax Credit** is an annual credit, provided for up to twenty years, against the corporate income tax. The amount of the annual credit is based on the eligible capital costs associated with a qualifying project. Eligible capital costs include all expenses incurred in the acquisition, construction, installation, and equipping of a project from the beginning of construction to the commencement of operations.

- **Research and Development Tax Credit** is available to a business enterprise that has qualified research expenses in Florida in the taxable year exceeding the base amount and, for the same taxable year, claims and is allowed a research credit for such qualified research expenses. The credit is equal to 10 percent of the excess qualified research expenses in Florida that exceeds the average Florida qualified research expenses allowed to the previous four tax years (base amount).
 - **Sales and Use Tax Exemption on Machinery and Equipment Used for Research and Development** is available on machinery and equipment used predominantly for research and development are exempt from sales and use tax. Eligibility "Machinery and equipment" includes, but is not limited to, molds, dies, machine tooling, other appurtenances or accessories to machinery and equipment, testing and measuring equipment, test beds, computers, and software, whether purchased or self-fabricated, and, if self-fabricated, includes materials and labor for design, fabrication, and assembly.
-

CONTACT

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MISSION

Improve the productivity and technological performance of Florida Manufacturers.

VISION

FloridaMakes is recognized as a statewide initiative which has significantly and measurably advanced Florida's manufacturing economy.

DESCRIPTION

We are a nonprofit statewide industry led partnership. These partnership(s) include involvement with Florida's Regional Manufacturer Associations, the State of Florida and as part of the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST MEP). These partnerships are designed to provide talent development, technology assistance and business growth service to improve the overall performance of individual firms. Deliverable/measurable economic impacts are the metrics of success.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

- **Enterprise Assessment:** Helps identify capabilities and potential shortcomings of the business

- **Business Growth and Innovation Services:** ID strategies for Growth; from identifying new customers to product development
 - **Technology Acceleration:** Provide cost/benefit analysis of new technology
 - **Export and International Market Development**
 - **Workforce Training and Development:** FloridaMakes leverages local and national services as well as internal training
 - **Supply Chain Optimization:** Provides step by step road map to help address risk, increase visibility and create opportunity
 - **Process Improvement:** LEAN, Toyota KATA, Six Sigma efforts and ISO Quality Management – to name a few
 - **Grants:** Much of the cost of these program improvement efforts can be offset by ITW and ETW grants offered by the state. Reimbursement of employer spend can range from 50% to 75%
-

CONTACT

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MISSION

The Florida High Tech Corridor Council is an economic development initiative of the University of Central Florida (UCF), the University of South Florida (USF) and the University of Florida (UF) with a mission to grow high tech industry and innovation – and the workforce to support it – in a 23-county region.

DESCRIPTION

Co-chaired by the presidents of UCF, USF and UF, The Corridor Council facilitates collaboration in the areas of research, marketing, workforce development, STEM education and entrepreneurship between more than 25 local and regional economic development organizations, 14 state colleges, 12 CareerSource boards and representatives of high tech industry from the Gulf Coast to the Space Coast.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

- **The Corridor Council's signature Matching Grants Research Program (MGRP)** facilitates applied research between high tech companies in the 23-county region and researchers from UCF, USF and UF. By matching investments in research and development, The Corridor Council enables companies to maximize their budgets and tap into the expertise of faculty and student researchers from three of the nation's largest research institutions. Students often become employees of the companies they work with in the program and industry partners routinely form lasting research relationships with the universities.
- **stemCONNECT** inspires middle school and high school students to pursue STEM education by connecting them with professionals in the field. With online video conferencing tools, subject-matter experts from across the region offer presentations and tours of their workplaces to teach students how their classroom lessons could lead to high tech career opportunities in Florida. The program reached more than 13,000 students in 2019 alone.
- **Talent Forum** is an annual event hosted by The Corridor Council and CareerSource Central Florida to support workforce development by building the region's talent pool. It maximizes time and investment in campus recruiting by convening career center professionals from 50 nationally recognized institutions in one place to meet with hiring managers from regional high tech companies. Employers learn about recruiting strategies, while discussing their talent needs and promoting job opportunities in The Corridor.
- **The Florida Virtual Entrepreneur Center (FLVEC.com)** is an online resource directory for entrepreneurs, featuring a master calendar of events and a sortable database of over 900 business resource agencies across the state. FLVEC also fosters community, bringing together entrepreneurs from across the state on a monthly call to ask questions, share best practices and learn about available resources to build their enterprises.

CONTACT

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FLORIDA VIRTUAL ENTREPRENEUR CENTER
Powered by The Corridor

MISSION

To make life easier for new entrepreneurs, local businesses and companies expanding or relocating in Florida.

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DESCRIPTION

FLVEC is powered by Florida High Tech Corridor, a regional economic development initiative of the University of Central Florida, the University of South Florida and the University of Florida.

In addition to an up-to-date master calendar of business and entrepreneurship related events and a sortable database of over business resource agencies, FLVEC has interviewed and captured the journeys of more than 700 entrepreneurs from 36 counties throughout the state. The businesses featured range in size from 1 to over 5,000 employees with industries covering the entire spectrum from manufacturing, aerospace, engineering, high tech and construction to hospitality, travel, retail and professional services.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

- Entrepreneur profiles directory featuring the stories of more than 900 Florida-based companies with the option to send a direct message on every profile.
 - Resource agencies directory offering access to support with business plans, funding, mentorship, hiring and more.
 - One-stop calendar of business events curated from more than 50 event sources.
 - Centralized business news page showing what's happening across Florida.
 - Exclusive offers from your peer business owners.
-

CONTACT

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MISSION

To provide strategies, resources and support to second-stage companies for next level growth.

DESCRIPTION

GrowFL dedicated to support and accelerate the growth of second-stage companies throughout Florida, by providing their leaders focused, efficient, and timely access to resources they deem important, such as connections with other second-stage company leaders, and to professional organizations whose expertise, experience, and products lead to the second-stage company's continued growth and prosperity resulting in diversification and growth of Florida's economy. Second-stage growth companies have at least 10 employees and a \$1 million in revenue and possess an intent and desire to grow beyond second-stage.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

Second-stage companies face unique challenges as they grow and GrowFL's Business Growth Program is designed to help their leadership overcome these obstacles by providing methods proven to help take their companies to the next level.

- CEO Roundtable
 - Strategic Research, Marketing & Sales Expansion
 - CEO Forum
 - Florida Companies to Watch
-

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MISSION

To foster vibrant small business communities through mentoring and education.

DESCRIPTION

SCORE, America's premier source of free and confidential small business advice for startups and established businesses, is a nonprofit resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration with over 300 chapters and 10,000 volunteers nationwide. To support small business success, two local SCORE Chapters continue to partner with local community organizations to serve Southwest Florida's Manatee, Sarasota, and Charlotte Counties. Over 120 local volunteer experts help clients achieve their goals to start, grow, buy, sell, or exit their businesses and solve problems through mentorship and education. SCORE's entrepreneur online business resource center has a wealth of information including workshops, webinars, blogs, how-to guides, videos and podcasts.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

- Free mentoring for existing businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs
- Low cost local learning events for existing and new businesses
 - Business podcasts, SCORE TV
 - Extensive online business resource library
-

CONTACT

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MISSION

To provide businesses the expertise and resources to succeed.

DESCRIPTION

The Florida Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at University of South Florida assists existing and emerging businesses in Sarasota county, through no-cost confidential business consulting, information, and low-cost training. Our professionally credentialed consultants have the real-world experience and expertise to help you make the right business decisions. Our consultants expertise focuses on areas that are vital to owning and operating a successful business, including: strategic market research, market expansion and revenue growth, business and strategic plan development, access to capital and loan packaging assistance, financial analysis and assessment, accounting systems and financial literacy, feasibility analysis and start-up assistance, disaster preparedness and cybersecurity.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

- **Growth Acceleration** provides in-depth business assessments and strategic planning for qualified businesses to develop sustainable growth strategies.
 - **Export Marketing Plans** position qualified manufacturing small businesses in Florida who are “new-to-export” to identify growth strategies through the development of specialized plans.
 - **Government Contracting** assists established businesses to expand by reaching new markets through federal, state and local government contracting.
 - **Small Business Certification** could present growth opportunities for your woman, minority, or Veteran-owned business.
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