



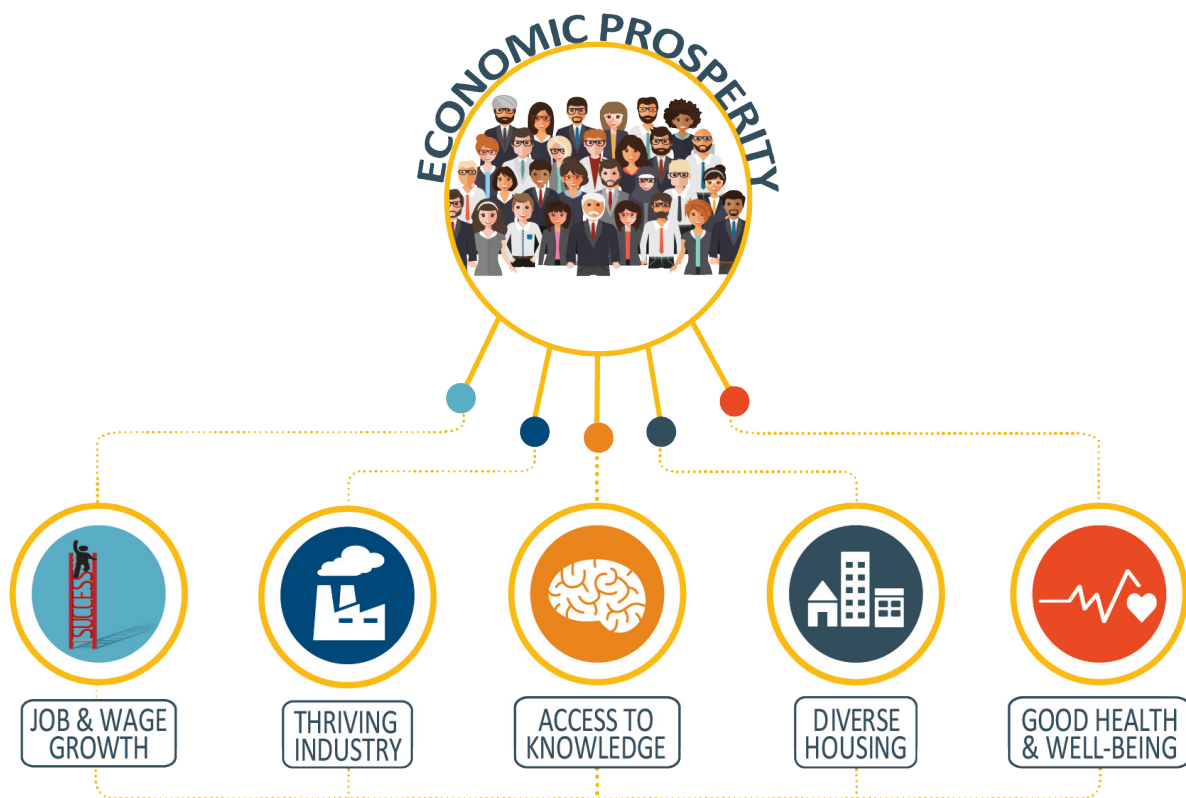
**EP**

**PLAN Pinellas \_ ECONOMIC PROSPERITY  
SUPPLEMENTAL**

# ECONOMIC PROSPERITY SUPPLEMENTAL [ EP ]

## INTRODUCTION

A strong local economy is achieved through coordinated initiatives, programs, and partnerships that support expanded economic opportunities for low-, moderate-, and high-wage workers. The policies outlined in PLANPinellas and the programs and projects that implement these policies should consider the needs of target industries, small-businesses, and the workforce. They should support thriving industries and improved quality of life. Investment in transportation infrastructure, housing affordability, and workforce training are essential to supporting the business community and realizing economic prosperity.



Diversity and availability of jobs help support equitable access to quality employment options. The County's economy benefits from access to a range of low-, middle-, and high-wage jobs. Middle-wage jobs are essential to local economies for two reasons. First, these jobs pay well enough for workers to provide their families with options and access to healthy food choices, home ownership, and higher education. In other words, these jobs create the middle class, which can buy and invest in the things that keep the economy growing. Second, these jobs are a crucial step on the career ladder, opening opportunities to advance from entry-level to high-level jobs.

Businesses that provide high-wage jobs enhance employment opportunities across all wage levels and are an essential part of business and economic growth. Growing the economy, focusing on middle- and high-wage work, results in increased numbers of jobs for middle- and low-wage workers, (e.g., those who work for support retail and service businesses). Local economic development efforts should move toward growing substantial sectors with higher-wage jobs, (when coupled with workforce training opportunities and infrastructural investments) which can achieve public benefits to increase economic mobility, or the ability for individuals and families to move up across income levels.



Opportunities for employment can also come from public and private funding that leverage local assets in areas that are poised for growth, especially within economically distressed areas, and to ensure public investments in roads, transit, sewers, and other community infrastructure projects that create jobs for people who are underemployed and unemployed.



Pinellas County, synonymous with beaches and tourism, has a rich and diverse mix of target industries—from manufacturing to aerospace to hospitality, which serve as anchor industries with the ability to drive the local economy and employ our residents. Land use strategies must support locational needs of these employers (e.g., near major highways; access to a trained workforce; etc.) Target industries rely on proximity to highways, airports, railways and ports. Workers benefit from convenient access to jobs through mobility options (e.g., street networks, transit, sidewalks, bike paths), and both target industry employers and small businesses are reliant on those employees having that accessibility. Availability of skilled employees is essential to remain competitive for high-wage jobs, and the County must coordinate with our schools and private sector to maintain a well-trained workforce.



A trained workforce is not only important to attract businesses to the area, but education and training is a means to achieve various economic benefits - better jobs, higher paychecks, and lower unemployment rates. Those with higher education have access to a range of job opportunities and can often earn more, spend more (supporting the local economy), and are less likely to be unemployed than those with high school education or less.

Having the means (skills, education, etc.) to successfully move from a lower-paying position into a higher-paying one is known as a career pathway or career ladder. Career pathways provide the means to help overcome barriers that limit employment opportunities, such as improving access to training or additional education. These types of opportunities are born from initiatives that expand job-oriented training and establish industry or sector-based training partnerships.



Safe, quality housing is essential for quality of life. Various housing options – different prices, sizes, and types - are crucial to promoting neighborhoods where families and households of all types and incomes can live. There is a clear connection between income levels and the affordability of housing; yet ensuring the availability of that range of housing is challenging. Insufficient housing options at various sizes and prices often means specific populations—including families, the elderly, and people with disabilities—cannot live in neighborhoods of their choice or close to jobs. Increasing the housing stock and job options increases racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity throughout the County, and helps build wealth and improve economic mobility for all residents. In order to have a sufficient workforce to fill the range of low-, middle- and high-wage jobs, there must be a diverse and affordable housing stock with easy access to transportation/transit options.



Feeling secure is essential to one's health and well-being. Secure employment with opportunities to advance education/training and incomes throughout an employee's lifetime and the ability to live in quality housing that is affordable significantly contribute to that sense of security. Transportation options provide access to schools, jobs, health insurance and exercise; all of which can lower stress levels and improve one's health. Businesses rely on a healthy workforce to be able to show up to a job and perform it effectively and consistently. Employees are depending upon the support of their employers, and likewise, employers cannot be successful without their employees. Our economy is an interdependent system of people and places – it is a community.