



Florida Job Growth Grant Fund Public Infrastructure Grant Proposal

Proposal Instructions: The Florida Job Growth Grant Fund Proposal (this document) must be completed by the governmental entity applying for the grant and signed by either the chief elected official, the administrator for the governmental entity or their designee. Please read the proposal carefully as some questions may require a separate narrative to be completed.

Governmental Entity Information

Name of Governmental Entity: St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners

Government Federal Employer Identification Number: ██████████

Contact Information:

Primary Contact Name: Nicole Fogarty

Title: Legislative Affairs Manager

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Public Infrastructure Grant Eligibility

Pursuant to section 288.101, F.S., the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund was created to promote economic opportunity by improving public infrastructure and enhancing workforce training. Eligible governmental entities that wish to access this grant fund must submit public infrastructure proposals that:

- Promote economic recovery in specific regions of the state, economic diversification or economic enhancement in a targeted industry. (View Florida's [Targeted Industries here.](#))
- Are not for the exclusive benefit of any single company, corporation or business entity.
- Are for infrastructure that is owned by the public and is for public use or predominately benefits the public.



1. Program Requirements:

Each proposal must include the following information describing how the project satisfies eligibility requirements listed on page 1.

- A. Provide the title and a detailed description of the public infrastructure improvements.

Port of Fort Pierce Land Acquisition

- B. Is this infrastructure owned by the public?

Yes No

- C. Is this infrastructure for public use or does it predominately benefit the public?

Yes No

- D. Will the public infrastructure improvements be for the exclusive benefit of any single company, corporation or business entity?

Yes No

- E. Provide a detailed explanation of how the public infrastructure improvements will connect to a broader economic development vision for the community and benefit additional current or future businesses.

This application is for assistance in acquiring 14 parcels located at the Port of Fort Pierce. For years the Port of Fort Pierce has been dormant according to the Florida Department of Transportation and the Florida Ports Council, except for a brief spurt of marine vessel Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) this past year. Acquiring these dormant parcels will give the State of Florida and St. Lucie County the opportunity to restore the Port of Fort Pierce’s infrastructure and to contribute to Florida’s MRO industry which is now facing growing competition from, among others, Savannah, GA.

The Port of Fort Pierce first came into existence in 1920 when a manmade opening, the Fort Pierce Inlet, was cut through the land barrier between the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian River Lagoon. St. Lucie County became the Port Authority in 1918 and a continuum of legislation has named the County as the Authority since that time. In 1918 a special act of the Florida Legislature established a taxing district to fund this project. Approximately 65 percent of St. Lucie County was in this Fort Pierce Inlet District, which was empowered to sell bonds to finance the project and to satisfy bond obligations through real property tax revenues. The Florida Legislature abolished the Fort Pierce Inlet District in 1947 and replaced it with the Fort. Pierce Port Authority, which retained the same power but was also granted the legal right to acquire and lease real estate. In 1961 a Special Act of the Florida Legislature replaced the Fort. Pierce Port Authority with the Ft. Pierce Port and Airport Authority, both of which were run by St. Lucie County. In 1989



the name of the Authority was changed to the St. Lucie County Port and Airport Authority. In 1997 the Florida Legislature provided reorganizing, updating and clarifying provisions for the Authority. In 1998 the Legislature dissolved the St. Lucie County Port and Airport Authority and transferred its assets, liabilities, and responsibilities to the Board of County Commissioners of St. Lucie County.

Although the Port of Fort Pierce lies physically within the City of Fort Pierce limits, it is the responsibility of St. Lucie County. Management of the Port of Fort Pierce falls under the jurisdiction of St. Lucie County, which is composed of five County Commissioners. Just recently, an Interlocal Agreement was developed to help define the role of both the City and the County in the development and management of the Port.

F. Provide a detailed description of, and quantitative evidence demonstrating, how the proposed public infrastructure project will promote:

- Economic recovery in specific regions of the state;
- Economic diversification; or
- Economic enhancement of a Targeted Industry (View Florida's [Targeted Industries here.](#))
 - As part of this response, describe how the project will promote specific job growth. Include a description of the number of jobs that will be retained or created, the average wages of such jobs, and in which industry(ies) the jobs will be created using the North American Industry Classification System ([NAICS](#)) codes. Where applicable, you may list specific businesses that will retain or grow jobs or make capital investment.
 - Further, include the economic impact on the community, region, or state and the associated metrics used to measure the success of the proposed project.

This acquisition benefits the region that expands well beyond St. Lucie County. The Port of Fort Pierce is centrally located in the state of Florida, near access to other international ports such as Palm Beach, Canaveral, and Everglades. The parcels the County will be acquiring at the Port of Fort Pierce could be a dedicated commercial manufacturing, repair, overhaul (MRO) facility. The county is currently in negotiations with several interested vessel owners as well as preferred MRO suppliers; however until the properties are acquired, we are unable to secure these contracts for leasing.

The County is striving to refresh the port's vision and direction and set strategies for revitalization, as well as tackle heavy county unemployment. It is realigning strategic plans and goals. This acquisition and the resulting contracts with the port user, will provide dramatic support to the County and its economy.

Between 2000 and 2010, St. Lucie County was one of the fastest growing counties in the United States with a total population increase of more than 80,000 during those years. While the housing crisis and economic downturn have had a severe impact on the economy of St. Lucie County, the county has maintained a strong focus on economic development. The St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners work hard to recruit new businesses and assist existing businesses to expand their operations.

St. Lucie County's growth rate in wages has been among the slowest in the nation. The population keeps rising, yet the average wage continues to decline compared to the national average. In an independent economic study done by Policom Corporation (February 2016), the County's major city, Port St. Lucie, ranked 164th largest in population as a Metropolitan Area and 372nd in Annual Wages. However, the city was at 319 among 381 areas for economic strength. Reasons for this is believed to stem from the area's boom-and-bust of the last 15



years, a rapid growth then a rapid decline in the economy. The county's workforce is abundant with most living within the Treasure Coast region. Unemployment has been historically high, when compared to the rest of the country and the state of Florida.

With this acquisition as well as a partnership with the local job training program at Indian River State College dedicated to marine maintenance, repair and overhaul, has all the aspects of attracting new companies to the region, rendering significant economic benefits to the region.

Jobs created by MROs are typically higher-paying, with an average wage of \$53,700 (Florida TaxWatch, July 2014). According to the National Marine Manufacturers Association, for Congressional District 18, the total annual economic impact of Marine MRO is \$619.9 million. In addition, the county is currently conducting a economic impact study to provide numbers on job creation and economic output at the Port of Fort Pierce.

2. Additional Information:

A. Is this project an expansion of an existing infrastructure project?

Yes No

B. Provide the proposed commencement date and number of days required to complete construction of the public infrastructure project.

This application is for assistance on acquiring properties at the Port of Fort Pierce. The County will be closing on the acquisition by December 31, 2017.

C. What is the location of the public infrastructure? (Provide the road number, if applicable.)

Port of Fort Pierce, located in Fort Pierce, FL

D. Who is responsible for maintenance and upkeep? (Indicate if more than one are applicable.)

Federal State **County** City Other _____

E. What permits are necessary for the public infrastructure project?

N/A

F. Detail whether required permits have been secured, and if not, detail the timeline for securing these permits. Additionally, if any required permits are local permits, will these permits be prioritized?

Due to the project being a land acquisition assistance request, permits will not be required. However, the previous owner has acquired permits have been acquired to extend the dock as well as dredging of the berth.



G. What is the future land use and zoning designation on the proposed site of the infrastructure improvements, and will the improvements conform to those uses?

The current future land use and zoning designation is Industrial. This designation does conform to any future improvements or entity use.



H. Will an amendment to the local comprehensive plan or a development order be required on the site of the proposed project or on adjacent property to accommodate the infrastructure and potential current or future job creation opportunities? If yes, please detail the timeline.

Yes No

I. Is the project ready to commence upon grant fund approval and contract execution? If no, please explain.

Yes No

J. Does this project have a local match amount?

Yes No

If yes, please describe the entity providing the match and the amount.

St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners.

K. Provide any additional information or attachments to be considered for this proposal.

Please see attached.



3. Program Budget

Estimated Costs and Sources of Funding: Include all applicable public infrastructure costs and other funding sources available to support the proposal.

A. Public Infrastructure Project Costs:

Construction	\$ _____
Reconstruction	\$ _____
Design & Engineering	\$ _____
Land Acquisition	\$ 45,000,000
Land Improvement	\$ _____

Other	\$ _____	Please Specify:	_____
Total Project Costs	\$ 45,000,000		

B. Other Public Infrastructure Project Funding Sources:

City/County	\$ 27,000,000
Private Sources	\$ _____

Other (grants, etc.)	\$ _____	Please Specify:	_____
Total Other Funding	\$ 18,000,000		

Total Amount Requested \$ 18,000,000

Note: The total amount requested must equal the difference between the public infrastructure project costs in 3.A. and the other public infrastructure project funding sources in 3.B.

C. Provide a detailed budget narrative, including the timing and steps necessary to obtain the funding and any other pertinent budget-related information.

The County is requesting a 40% match towards the acquisition of 14 parcels located at the Port of Fort Pierce. The total cost of the acquisition will \$45 million, the County has set a closing date of December 31, 2017. The County will be bonding their portion of the match for the purchase and those should be in hand by December 2017.



4. Approvals and Authority

- A. If the governmental entity is awarded grant funds based on this proposal, what approvals must be obtained before it can execute a grant agreement with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (e.g., approval of a board, commission or council)?

St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners will have to approve the agreement as an agenda item at a formal Board meeting.

- B. If approval of a board, commission, council or other group is needed prior to execution of an agreement between the governmental entity and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity:

- i. Provide the schedule of upcoming meetings for the group for a period of at least six months.

October 3 and 17, November 7 and 21, December 5 and 19, January 2 and 16

- ii. State whether that group can hold special meetings, and if so, upon how many days' notice.

Yes, the Board will need to notify the public at least 3 days prior to the meeting

- C. Attach evidence that the undersigned has all necessary authority to execute this proposal on behalf of the governmental entity. This evidence may take a variety of forms, including but not limited to: a delegation of authority, citation to relevant laws or codes, policy documents, etc.



I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I have express authority to sign this proposal on behalf of the above-described governmental entity.

Name of Governmental Entity: St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Name and Title of Authorized Representative: David Tipton, County Administrator

Representative Signature: 

Signature Date: 9/22/2017