

# VISIT GAINESVILLE ALACHUA COUNTY

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL REPORT – JANUARY 2025



## RECENT UPDATES

### New Workforce Initiative Pilot Program: Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP) Certification

Through the American Hotel and Lodging Education Institute (AHLEI), Visit Gainesville, Alachua County is proud to launch a pilot program offering **free Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP)** certifications to Alachua County's hospitality and tourism workforce. This opportunity is available to the **first 150 participants** who apply.

The CGSP certification is a nationally recognized credential that highlights excellence in guest service, equipping industry professionals with the skills needed to create exceptional visitor experiences.

By earning this certification, local hospitality and tourism employees will gain valuable tools to elevate customer interactions, strengthen their professional development, and help position Alachua County as a premier destination for leisure and business travel.

For more information, email Bailey McClellan at [bmcclellan@alachuacounty.us](mailto:bmcclellan@alachuacounty.us)

## GROUP SALES – JANUARY 2025

Through local community efforts and targeted sales missions at industry association events, such as FL Society of Association Executives (FSAE) and Meeting Professionals International (MPI), Visit Gainesville, Alachua County promotes the county as a preferred conference destination. The visitors bureau offers professional services including assistance with RFP sourcing, itinerary planning, financial incentives via the Meeting Advantage program and more to support the success of events in Alachua County.

## RECENT / UPCOMING SALES MISSIONS & TRADESHOWS

### Visit Florida's Huddle and Encounter, Ocala, FL – February 3–5, 2025

Visit Gainesville, Alachua County will sponsor the Coffee Bar station again this year at the Huddle/Encounter groups sales and tours trade show. This sponsorship was well received by last year's attendees and proved to be a great conduit to initiating conversations with meeting planners in attendance. This year we will also have new, on-brand, highly engaging displays ensuring high visibility throughout the trade show. Additionally, the VCB will showcase updated promotional items and a new group sales brochure. Participation includes two exhibit booths (1 Huddle, 1 Encounter), two registrations, and over 40 pre-vetted appointments with professional conference planners, journalists, and tour operators.

## RECENTLY SOURCED RFP

### University of Texas and University of Tennessee Alumni

Florida Gators v. Texas Weekend: October 3 – 5, 2025

Florida Gators v. Tennessee Weekend: November 21 – 23, 2025

400 rooms required each weekend.

## TRAVEL WRITERS

### Itinerary Development: Andreza Dica & Indica

January 30 – February 2, 2025

Reach: 140,000+ Followers

The VCB partnered with Visit Florida for a visit from vetted Brazilian travel writer and influencer, Andreza Dica & Indica. An itinerary was created for the influencer who will feature Gainesville in a series about Florida college towns, targeting Brazilians in the U.S. exploring Florida colleges, Brazilian residents considering higher education abroad, and tourists seeking unique destinations. This engagement will yield a blog article, two Instagram feed posts (Reels or Carousel), daily Instagram Stories, two Facebook posts reposted from Instagram, and a YouTube video.

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## UPCOMING

National Travel and Tourism Week 2025  
May 5–11, 2025

Visit Gainesville, Alachua County will celebrate National Travel and Tourism Week 2025 by honoring the local hospitality and tourism workforce with the 3rd Annual Spirit of Hospitality Awards. Nominations will soon be requested from tourism partners across the county to recognize outstanding team members for their dedication and contributions to the industry.

During the week, Visit Gainesville staff will deliver awards in person to the nominees, recognizing their hard work and commitment to stellar hospitality.

Additionally, the team will visit every lodging property in Alachua County to personally thank frontline workers for their efforts in making the destination welcoming and memorable for visitors.

This initiative highlights the critical role of the frontline workforce in driving Alachua County's tourism success and fostering a strong community of hospitality professionals.

## GROUP SALES – JANUARY 2025

### FILMING IN ALACHUA COUNTY

Diner's, Drive-ins, and Dives Filming in Alachua County

Date of Filming: December 2024

Diner's, Drive-ins, and Dives filmed an episode in Alachua County featuring local restaurants and the diverse culinary scene. Visit Gainesville, Alachua County assisted by expanding upon the original list of restaurants created by the production team to include additional locations that represented a variety of communities and flavors throughout the county for consideration.

Additionally, the VCB partnered with Working Food's Kitchen Program to highlight local entrepreneurs and provide the film crew with samples of Alachua County-produced products to supporting local businesses.

The episode's air date is to be announced. This exposure offers significant visibility for Alachua County's food scene to a nationwide audience.



The Meeting Advantage Program has 8 new applications, with a requested funding amount of \$40,810. Combined these events are projected to generate approximately \$393,568 in lodging revenue and bring an estimated direct spending economic impact of \$1,220,767 to Alachua County with an induced total economic impact of \$1,896,466.

NEW APPLICATION REQUEST: **\$40,810.00**  
Estimated Lodging Revenue: **\$393,568.00**  
Estimated Direct Sales Economic Impact: **\$1,220,767.00**  
Estimated Total Economic Impact: **\$1,896,466.00**

FY2025 Meeting Advantage Program Budget Allocation \$200,000  
Fiscal YTD Awards **\$64,890.00**  
Fiscal YTD TOTAL REIMBURSED GRANT AMOUNT: **\$6,920.60**

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**UF/Public Utility Research Center (PURC) World Bank International Training Program on Utility Regulations and Strategy**

**Verified Request Amount: \$9,900.00**

January 13 – 22, 2025

Lodging & Conference Location: Hilton University of Florida Conference Center  
660 room nights

**FL Mosquito Control Association, Dodd Short Course Training**

**Verified Request Amount: \$10,000.00**

January 27 – 30, 2025

Lodging & Conference Location: Hilton University of Florida Conference Center  
822 room nights

**Southern Group of State Foresters, 2025 Water Resources Committee Meeting**

**Verified Request Amount: \$810.00**

February 10 – 14, 2025

Lodging & Conference Location: Hotel Indigo Gainesville – Celebration Pointe  
54 room nights

**Greater Palm Beach Rose Society, 2025 Deep South District Mid-Winter Meeting**

**Verified Request Amount: \$1,350.00**

February 28 – March 2, 2025

Lodging & Conference Location: Best Western Gateway Grand  
90 room nights

**Eagle Wings Motorcycle Association, FL District Gathering of Friends for Fun**

**Verified Request Amount: \$7,500.00**

March 13 – 15, 2025

Lodging & Conference Location: Best Western Gateway Grand  
500 room nights

**FL Native Plant Society, Inc., Seeds of Tomorrow Conference**

**Verified Request Amount: \$5,850.00**

April 2 – 6, 2025

Lodging & Conference Location: Hilton University of Florida Conference Center

390 nights

**Gator Detachment 990, Marine Corps League Department of FL Spring Conference**

**Verified Request Amount: \$2,745.00**

April 10 – 13, 2025

Lodging & Conference Location: Best Western Gateway Grand

183 room nights

**MG Classics of Jacksonville, Gathering of the Faithful MG**

**Verified Request Amount: \$2,700.00**

April 24 – 27, 2025

Lodging & Conference Location: Best Western Gateway Grand

120 room nights