

VISIT GAINESVILLE ALACHUA COUNTY

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL REPORT – MAY 2025



RECENT UPDATES

Meeting Advantage Program Economic Impacts FY25 (YTD)

Since the start of the fiscal year on October 1, 2024, the Meeting Advantage Program has supported 27 conferences, meetings, and events across Alachua County.

To date, the program has awarded \$125,285.20 in funding, with \$46,592.38 in actual reimbursements processed. The supported conferences are estimated to have generated \$1.2 million in lodging revenue, contributing to a projected \$6.2 million in total economic impact for Alachua County.

To learn more about the reimbursement program and to see if an event is eligible for funding, please email Bailey McClellan at bmcclellan@alachuacounty.us

GROUP SALES – MAY 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

Florida Society of Association Executives' Annual Conference, West Palm Beach, FL July 9 – 11, 2025

Visit Gainesville, Alachua County will attend to promote the destination's conference and meeting capabilities to Florida-based association executives and decision makers. The Group Sales staff will represent Alachua County, highlighting the Meeting Advantage Program, which offers reimbursement incentives for organizations that choose to host events in the area. As a sponsor of three breakout sessions, staff will speak directly to attendees before each presentation, offering valuable one-on-one engagement opportunities. Executives will receive the updated Group Sales brochure, along with materials outlining Alachua County's meeting spaces and reimbursement program.

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES (FAC) INNOVATION & POLICY CONFERENCE – SITE VISIT

After submitting a proposal to host the 2025 Florida Association of Counties (FAC) Innovation & Policy Conference, Alachua County was selected as the host destination and is responsible for coordinating a full-day educational tour for conference attendees, highlighting innovative initiatives and community assets across the county.

To review the proposed tour agenda, Visit Gainesville, Alachua County welcomed representatives from the Florida Association of Counties for a site visit on Wednesday, April 23rd.

The itinerary, developed by VCB staff and county leadership, was presented through in-person visits to key tour stops, including:

- Alachua County's West End
- Alachua County Agriculture & Equestrian Center
- Alachua County Sports & Events Center
- Ben Hill Griffin Stadium at the University of Florida

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UPCOMING

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

Visit Gainesville, Alachua County will celebrate with the 3rd Annual Hospitality Recognition Awards, presenting plaques to hospitality professionals nominated by peers for exceptional service. Staff will deliver awards at the May 14 TDC meeting thanking frontline workers for their contributions.

Alachua County Agritourism Conference
Summer 2025, Date TBD

Visit Gainesville, Alachua County will host the Alachua County Agritourism Conference, bringing together agritourism operators and those interested in developing agritourism ventures. The workshop will cover industry best practices through expert speaker sessions, interactive discussions, and networking opportunities.

Topics to include:

Agriculture and Agritourism Trends
Legal Considerations & Tax Benefits
Permitting & Fire Safety
Funding and Support Opportunities

Photo: FoodNetwork.com recipe of Germain's Chicken Sandwiches, Crispy Spicy Chicken Sandwiches

GROUP SALES – MAY 2025

RECENT FILM PROJECTS

Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives (DDD) Featured Alachua County Restaurateurs

Six Alachua County restaurants were recently featured on the Food Network's *Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives (DDD)*, bringing national attention to the area's standout culinary talent and creativity.

The first episode aired on Friday, March 14, 2025, and was titled "*African, Sicilian & Sausage*," highlighting Fehrenbacher's Meats & Eats at 4th Avenue Food Park.

Subsequent episodes included:

- **Humble Wood Fire Bagel Shop** – April 4, episode titled "*Flavortown Finds*"
- **The Paper Bag Deli** – April 11, episode titled "*Sandwich Shenanigans*"
- **Uppercrust Bakery** – April 26, episode titled "*Sandwiches, Seafood and Sweets*"
- **Germain's Chicken Sandwiches** – May 2, episode titled "*Specialty Spots*"
- **Bingo Deli + Pub** – May 9, episode titled "*Southeast Standouts*"

This series of features showcased the range and quality of Alachua County's food scene. Visit Gainesville, Alachua County supported the momentum through digital engagement and continues to celebrate these local culinary entrepreneurs who represent the heart of the community.



RECIPE COURTESY OF GERMAIN'S CHICKEN SANDWICHES

Crispy Spicy Chicken Sandwiches

The Meeting Advantage Program has 7 new applications, with a requested funding amount of \$27,600. Combined these events are projected to generate approximately \$268,648 in lodging revenue and bring an estimated direct spending economic impact of \$590,020 to Alachua County with an induced total economic impact of \$913,473.

NEW APPLICATION REQUEST: \$27,600.00

Estimated Lodging Revenue: \$268,648.00

Estimated Direct Sales Economic Impact: \$590,020.00

Estimated Total Economic Impact: \$913,473.00

FY2025 Meeting Advantage Program Budget Allocation \$200,000

Fiscal YTD Awards **\$125,285.20**

Fiscal YTD TOTAL REIMBURSED GRANT AMOUNT: **\$47,252.38**

Alpha Kappa Alpha Iota Lambda 50th Reunion

Verified Request Amount: \$4,155.00

May 16 – 18, 2025

Conference & Lodging Location: Hilton University of Florida Conference Center

277 room nights

Florida Environmental Health Association, Annual Education Meeting

Verified Request Amount: \$10,000.00

June 1 – 7, 2025

Lodging & Conference Location: Hilton University of Florida Conference Center

700 room nights

Blssd Future Inc., 8th Annual Teach Me to Dance

Verified Request Amount: \$1,800.00

June 13 – 15, 2025

Lodging Location: Hilton University of Florida Conference Center

Conference Location: MLK Jr. Multipurpose Center, UF Reitz Union Grand Ballroom, Bo Diddley Plaza

120 room nights

World Wide Christian Ministries, Inc., 2025 General Assembly

Verified Request Amount: \$4,275.00

June 10 – 15, 2025

Lodging & Conference Location: Best Western Gateway Grand

285 room nights

UF/PURC Advanced International Practices Program: Energy Pricing & Benchmark Coursing

Verified Request Amount: \$3,150.00

July 28 – August 7, 2025

Lodging Location: AC Hotel Gainesville Downtown

Conference Location: UF Warrington College of Business, Hough Hall

210 room nights

Florida Urban Forestry Council, Member Summit

Verified Request Amount: \$1,200.00

July 31 – August 1, 2025

Conference & Lodging Location: Hilton University of Florida Conference Center

80 room nights

Florida Fire Chiefs Associate Cadet Section, Summer Gator Fire Games 2025

Verified Request Amount: \$3,060.00

August 1 – 2, 2025

Lodging Location: Hotel Indigo, Hilton Garden Inn

Conference Location: Alachua County Sports & Events Center

204 room nights