MEMORANDUM

AGENDA ITEM #III.E

DATE: OCTOBER 20, 2025

TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: STAFF

SUBJECT: 2022-2027 SOUTH FLORIDA CEDS ANNUAL REPORT

Since 1994, the SFRPC has served as the Economic Development District (EDD) for South Florida and as the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) regional point of contact. In this role, the SFRPC works closely with regional stakeholders and the EDA to identify, secure, and deploy funding and technical assistance programs in South Florida. As the EDD, the SFRPC is responsible for developing, maintaining, and updating South Florida's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) every five years, working in partnership with the region's leaders and community stakeholders. As a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development, the CEDS provides an analysis of economic trends, opportunities, and challenges and then provides regional goals, strategies, and metrics to promote and support long-term economic prosperity for South Florida and its residents. On October 17, 2022, the SFRPC adopted the 2022-2027 CEDS for South Florida.

The CEDS Strategy Committee, chaired by Senator Geller, consists of the region's top public, private, and nonprofit CEOs representing educational institutions, economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, employers, transit agencies, workforce training, local governments, resilience officers, and senior-level staff, among others. This report reflects their agreement on regional goals and key strategies to leverage regional assets and opportunities, diminish barriers, and create a vibrant and competitive economic environment that is diversified and resilient. After EDA has approved the initial CEDS, EDA-funded planning grantees are required to submit an annual report with updated data documenting the progress achieved on economic development activities, regardless of the source of funding, and reports on changing economic conditions.

<u>Recommendation</u>

Adopt the CEDS Annual Report and authorize CEDS Chair, Senator Geller, to make any small adjustments to this report as identified by the CEDS Committee at its upcoming October 22, 2025, meeting.

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2025 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
2022 – 2027 South Florida Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The South Florida Regional Planning Council (SFRPC) is the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration's designated Economic Development District (EDD) for South Florida. The Economic Development District service area is Monroe, Miami-Dade, and Broward counties where the Council helps lead a locally based, regionally driven economic development process. We work with local government, public, private, non-profit, and philanthropic partners to provide information, technical assistance, and support and lead regional economic development efforts.

One of the functions of the Economic Development District is to prepare a five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which sets forth goals and strategies that support the economic development of the South Florida region. Each year, the Council prepares an Annual Progress Report to identify the most important changes in the South Florida economy and to assess the region's progress toward CEDS goals.

This 2025 CEDS Annual Progress Report is the third annual update since the adoption of the 2022-2027 CEDS and contains the following updates for the period October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025:

- Highlights of key changes to the regional economy, priorities, and adjustments of strategies of the CEDS
- Report on Economic Development Activities
- Evaluation of Progress on Action Plan and Goals
- Schedule for Next Year's Goals

As such, the Annual Report meets the four report criteria set forth by US EDA. These are:

1) Adjust the CEDS as needed. Adjustments to the strategy may be necessary during the course of the year to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities or address unexpected problems. These adjustments should be consistent with the overall strategy and must be documented in the next annual report. Any changes in the structure or composition of the Strategy Committee or staff should also be described in the annual report.

No adjustments were made to the strategy.

(2) Report on the previous year's economic development activities and any significant changes in the region's economic conditions. A report of economic development activities undertaken in the previous year should be related to the needs identified in the strategy and (3) Evaluate effectiveness in meeting goals.

Both items (2) and (3) are reported in this Progress Report, and the activities are related to the Goals of the CEDS.

(4) Schedule achievable goals for the coming year.

In 2026, the South Florida Economic Development District (EDD) will hold four quarterly meetings of the Strategy Committee to strengthen interagency cooperation and contribute to a regional approach to economic development. In 2026, EDD staff will assist the City of Miami in pursuing funding to provide workforce training opportunities; continue work on studying the impacts of Florida's ocean economy for the state Office of the Ocean Economy and provide support to other public and private entities that have strong economic development links. Other activities include scheduling EDA grant opportunity information and listening sessions for regional economic development staff and assisting them with applications for economic development funding from the EDA.

Staff will continue to contribute to the newly designated Risk and Resiliency hub in South Florida to foster the development of various technologies to help Florida withstand future extreme weather events using green infrastructure and to foster job growth in related industries. EDD staff will expand economic impact technical assistance as needed to member agencies.

Executive Summary

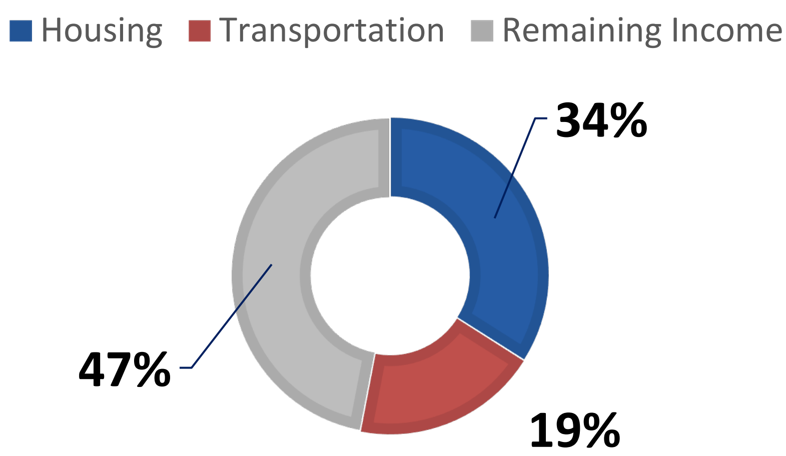
This 2025 Annual Progress Report for the South Florida Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) provides a detailed assessment of the region's economic recovery, emerging challenges, and the ongoing pursuit of long-term goals, particularly in the context of economic resilience and equity. The report uses the best available data, however, many data sources have recently been discontinued or delayed due to significant budget cuts at federal agencies. Nevertheless, the SFRPC has noted that South Florida's economy continues to make progress since the 2022 CEDS adoption, albeit with fewer data sources as current indicators to source more robust conclusions. As with past annual reports, there remain critical areas requiring attention, including infrastructure, housing affordability, and workforce training.

Addressing the dual challenge of transportation and housing in South Florida, the SFRPC convened a regional conference on *The Business Case for Transit-Oriented Development with Affordable and Workforce Housing* on September 11, 2025. This event brought together experts from across Southeast Florida to highlight the combined impact of housing and transportation costs on regional competitiveness and the business case for supporting greater transit use and transit-oriented development as an economic development strategy. As reported by the Center for Neighborhood Technology, in 2022 Southeast Florida has the highest combined housing and transportation cost burden among the nation’s largest metropolitan areas.

Figure 1 shows that if regional spending on housing (30%) and transportation (15%) more closely mirrored national norms, the typical household would save $6,100 annually, equivalent to $14 billion across the region.[1] According to SRPC’s REMI PI+ simulations (2025), improving average job accessibility by 1%, equivalent to about 35,000 more jobs within a commutable time, would increase regional personal income by approximately $1.7 billion.[2]

[1] Based on CNT’s H+T Index (2022), Southeast Florida households spend ~45% of income on housing and transportation compared with 40% nationally, producing an estimated $6,100 differential per household.”
[2] SFRPC (2025) analysis of the four county Southeast Florida region, using the labor access variable in REMI PI+ v 3.3 (2025).

Figure 1: Housing and Transportation Costs as a Share of Typical Household Income in Southeast Florida



Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology, 2022.

The insights from the Business Case study reinforce and directly connect to the findings of the 2025 CEDS Annual Report. Conference speakers confirmed that South Florida's greatest economic pressures, housing affordability, infrastructure strain, and workforce accessibility, are not isolated issues but interdependent challenges. Accordingly, the CEDS analysis presented below builds on these findings, documenting both the progress made since 2022 and the persistent barriers that continue to shape the region's economic trajectory.

This CEDS Annual Update is divided into five sections: Economic Context; Workforce and Labor; Housing and Affordability; Industry/Sectoral Performance; and National Trends. Key Economic Highlights identify the most significant recent trends, based on the availability of pertinent data.

The 2025 Annual Update of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the South Florida Economic Development District, covering Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties, captures the region's continued recovery and structural evolution through August 2025. Where specified, some data series, such as industry GDP and poverty measures, remain available only through 2023.

Summary of Findings

Employment and Economic Growth

South Florida's economy expanded steadily through 2024–2025. The region added about 42,000 jobs, growing slightly faster than the national average for metropolitan areas. Most gains occurred in health care, education, construction, leisure and hospitality, and retail. The unemployment rate stayed among the lowest in Florida, generally between 3 and 3.7 percent, indicating a tight labor market where employers must compete for workers. Construction again became a major growth driver as public and private investment in housing and infrastructure accelerated. This shift toward health care, infrastructure, and technology shows the region's gradual move from traditional service industries to a more diverse, higher-value economy.

Labor Force Participation and Workforce Conditions

Labor Force Participation is defined by the share of working-age residents working or looking for work rebounded to roughly 64 percent, up sharply from pandemic lows of 61%, and now exceeding both the state and national averages. This recovery signals confidence and steady in-migration of working-age adults. However, growth in jobs and commuters has intensified congestion, as most people continue to drive alone to work. Despite low unemployment, many residents still face barriers to entering or staying in the labor force. High housing costs, expensive childcare, and limited transit options restrict access to employment.

Workforce participation could rise further if housing and childcare were more affordable and if transit options connected more neighborhoods to major job centers. Expanding technical and vocational training, especially in health care, logistics, construction, and clean energy, would help close the skills gap that employers identify across the region. Stronger coordination between employers, training providers, and public agencies will be essential to ensure that local workers benefit from new opportunities.

Housing and Infrastructure

Housing affordability remains South Florida's most serious economic challenge, driven by the challenges of increasing supply, and in part, by short-term rentals. In a 2020 study, researchers found that Airbnb raised average annual rental prices in the Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach MSA by 1%, and home prices by 1.5%.[3] Median home prices exceed $2 million in Monroe County, $1 million in Miami-Dade, and nearly $500,000 in Broward. These prices have risen far faster than wages, pushing ownership and even renting out of reach for many

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[3] Barron, Kyle and Kung, Edward and Proserpio, Davide, The Effect of Home-Sharing on House Prices and Rents: Evidence from Airbnb (March 4, 2020). Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3006832 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3006832

households, while Broward's Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) households comprise 37 percent of the county households, 39 percent in Miami-Dade, and 35 percent in Monroe, against a 34 percent state average in 2023.[4]

At the same time, transportation congestion costs the region billions each year in wasted time and reduced productivity. The combination of high housing costs and heavy traffic reduces quality of life, limits workforce mobility, and threatens long-term competitiveness. Expanding housing options near transit, improving transit reliability, and investing in resilient infrastructure can reduce these costs and make the region more inclusive. Integrated planning, linking housing, transportation, and economic development, offers the clearest path to sustainable growth.

Population and Migration Dynamics

Population growth in South Florida has stabilized after the rapid shifts of the pandemic period. Miami-Dade continues to rely heavily on international migration to support population and labor-force growth, while Broward maintains steady domestic inflows. Monroe's small but high-income population is shaped by tourism and second-home ownership. Moreover, Monroe County's growth potential is severely limited by its size, access to the mainland, and by crowding out of new development potential as the County is already well-developed.

These trends sustain consumer demand and employment but intensify housing strain. As the population becomes more international and diverse, language access, skills recognition, and credentialing (professional certifications that document training and level of skill/proficiency) will grow in importance for workforce programs. Coordinated regional planning will be needed to manage growth pressures while preserving environmental quality and community character.

Key Correlations and Regional Outlook

Employment and Infrastructure

South Florida's strong job growth, particularly in construction, health care, and hospitality, has intensified pressure on the region's already strained transportation systems. As employment and population have grown, traffic congestion and transit delays have become more severe, now costing the region an estimated $3 billion each year in lost productivity and time. Without significant investment in modernized, multimodal infrastructure, continued economic growth will deepen these bottlenecks, eroding competitiveness and quality of life. Expanding transit-oriented development and accelerating infrastructure projects will be essential to maintain regional mobility and economic efficiency.

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[4] United for Alice. 2025.County Snapshots, Florida. uwof.org/sites/uwof/files/2025-alice-report-county-snapshots-florida.pdf

Housing and Economic Inequality

Rapid housing price escalation has deepened inequality across South Florida. Monroe County's median listings exceed $2 million, while Miami-Dade and Broward continue to see steady appreciation, keeping homeownership out of reach for much of the middle class. Rent burdens have risen across all income levels, leaving many households spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing. This dynamic reinforces spatial and economic divides, as workers are pushed farther from employment centers. Reduced housing access limits labor mobility, raises commuting costs, and constrains workforce availability for key sectors such as health care, education, and construction. Addressing these challenges requires accelerating attainable housing production, especially near major job hubs and transit corridors.

Sector Growth and Workforce Alignment

Expanding sectors, including construction, health care, and logistics highlight ongoing mismatches between employer demand and available skills. Job openings in building trades, digital infrastructure, and health support occupations consistently outnumber qualified local applicants, leading to unfilled positions and upward wage pressure. Strengthening technical and vocational programs remains a top regional priority. Partnerships among schools, employers, and workforce agencies should focus on stackable credentials and targeted training aligned with emerging industries in clean energy, advanced construction, and data technology. Building this talent pipeline is vital to maintaining balanced and inclusive growth.

Forecast for South Florida Economic Conditions through 2026

1. Regional Growth Outlook

The region is expected to maintain steady but slower economic growth through 2026. Current indicators point to cooling momentum rather than contraction. Neither the United States nor Florida has met the Sahm-rule recession trigger[5], and while federal budget uncertainty may briefly slow data releases and grant processing, South Florida's core sectors of tourism, construction, logistics, and health care remain stable and well positioned for continued expansion.

[5] SFRPC, 2025. The Sahm rule, a highly respected leading indicator of recessions, identifies the start of a recession when the three-month moving average of the national unemployment rate rises by 0.5 percentage points or more above its lowest value during the previous 12 months. It serves as a real-time indicator of economic downturns based on labor market deterioration.

2. Labor Market

As noted previously, labor conditions remain tight. The regional labor force participation rate of about 64 percent exceeds both state and national averages, reflecting continued migration and strong job demand. Employment growth will persist in health care, logistics, and construction, with modest gains in professional and business services. If unemployment rises enough to activate the Sahm-rule threshold in 2026, regional partners such as Workforce Boards should quickly pivot toward preparing for workforce retraining in the hardest-hit industries, targeted small-business support, and other counter-cyclical investment, which may include increased public spending, low-interest bridge loans or deferred tax payments.

3. Housing Market

Affordability remains the binding constraint on long-term growth. Home prices and rents continue to outpace wages, particularly in Miami-Dade and Monroe. As highlighted in SFRPC's recent *Business Case for Transit-Oriented Development with Affordable and Workforce Housing Study*, without faster production of attainable units, especially in transit-accessible areas, cost burdens will depress labor participation and limit employers' ability to attract and retain workers. Coordinated action among local governments, housing authorities, and private developers is needed to close the affordability gap.

4. Infrastructure and Mobility

Persistent congestion and long commutes will continue to drag on productivity and household budgets. Strategic priorities include improving transit reliability, expanding multimodal capacity, and supporting transit-oriented development that lowers the combined cost of housing and transportation. Agencies should sequence federal and state-funded projects carefully to protect timelines from potential budget or reimbursement delays.

5. Sectoral Outlook

Education and health services, construction, trade, logistics, transportation, and hospitality will continue to anchor job growth. Professional and business services are expected to expand modestly, while niche manufacturing in aviation, food processing, and marine industries should hold steady but remain sensitive to financing costs.

6. Risk Balance and Monitoring

The near-term risk environment is moderate. Key downside triggers include a sustained rise in unemployment, prolonged federal funding disruptions, or renewed housing price acceleration. Regional partners should closely monitor employment, labor participation, building permits, multifamily construction, rent and price trends, and transit ridership. Adjusting the timing of workforce and capital investments in response to these signals will help sustain stability and resilience through 2026.

Trends to Watch

Looking further down the road, there are many other emerging trends and circumstances will affect the region's economy. Among those are:

The AI Revolution

Artificial intelligence is transforming South Florida's key industries, although the rates of "exposure," the percent of jobs that could be performed or augmented by generative artificial intelligence vary by industry and by area. According to the Brookings Institution, 36 percent of Broward's jobs are exposed to generative artificial intelligence,[6] 35 percent of Miami-Dade's jobs are exposed, and 29 percent of Monroe's jobs are exposed.[7]

In tourism and hospitality, research shows AI-driven "travel agents" and algorithms are already reshaping customer service and bookings. For example, FAU researchers have found that that autonomous AI agents will soon select hotels and make reservations, meaning Florida's hotels (servicing 34 million summer visitors) must design loyalty and experiences appealing to both human guests and AI algorithms.[8] In logistics, ports and cargo firms are adopting automation and AI analytics. In healthcare, Florida hospitals are using AI tools (e.g. imaging diagnostics, "AI scribes" to automate paperwork) to boost efficiency and ease labor shortages These technologies allow doctors and nurses to spend more time on patients while reducing costs.[9] Overall, AI offers productivity gains but also pressures skilled and unskilled jobs; local forecasts emphasize upskilling workers to fill new tech roles rather than lose them.

Silver Tsunami

Nationally fertility rates and births per woman have plummeted from 3.65 in 1960 to 1.62 in 2023. [10] South Florida is aging faster than the nation attracting residents fleeing colder weather and seeking retirement. The Census Bureau projects that by 2050 the median age in

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[6] Artificial intelligence designed to produce output, especially text or images, normally requiring human intelligence, typically by applying machine learning techniques to large collections of data.

[7] The geography of generative AI's workforce impacts will likely differ from those of previous technologies | Brookings, 2025

[8] FAU Study: Hotels Must Rethink Loyalty as AI Agents Take Over Travel Planning | FAU Business, 2025.

[9] Williams, Evan. AI's Growing Role, Florida Trend. April 18, 2025.

[10] https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/SPDYNTFRTINUSA, retrieved 10-14-2025

Florida will be about 55 (vs. 43 nationally). In the tri-county region of Miami-Dade, Broward, Monroe counties, the over 65 cohort will nearly double, and in Monroe County the over 85s cohort will triple, with Broward's 85+ rate just behind that of Monroe County. The 65+ workforce is already large and growing. In Broward County, for example, the 65+ population is projected to rise from 519,000 today to 766,000 by 2050. This demographic shift shrinks the prime-age workforce and labor force participation rates, Nationally, 55 – 60% of the decline in labor-force participation since 2000 is due to retiring baby boomers. Demand for healthcare and supportive services is surging. Elderly residents consume more healthcare and less retail, negatively impacting sales tax revenue since Florida does not collect a sales tax on services. National studies show that consumer spending shifts toward medical services and housing with age. In Florida, senior care is especially costly with assisted living facilities averaging between $4,750 to $5,250 per month depending on the county. Annual homecare can exceed $15,000, forcing counties to expand medical and social services.[11]

On the fiscal side, reliance on Social Security and Medicare is high. About 478,000 South Florida households currently receive Social Security benefits equal to 9 – 10% of total regional personal income. Projected cuts of up to 23 percent to Social Security payments by 2033 could mean upwards of $10 billion less income which is equivalent to 50,000 lost jobs regionally a year.[12] Local governments face rising pension and Medicaid costs at the same time that tax breaks for seniors (e.g. 65+ homestead exemptions) shift burdens onto younger homeowners. In sum, the "Silver Tsunami" will tighten labor markets, boost healthcare and eldercare demand, and strain county and state budgets as the number of 65+ households grows by more than 40 percent over the next twenty years.

Blue Ocean Economy

Florida's marine and coastal industries – from ports and boating to fisheries and marine science – are a major economic engine, especially in South Florida. Florida's Office of the Ocean Economy estimates that state's ocean economy sustained 909 thousand jobs and generated $96 billion in Gross State Product in 2024.[13] Tourism and recreation generated the largest share of ocean economy jobs (37%). Locally, South Florida ports anchor this sector. PortMiami's activities accounted for **$61.4 billion** of economic output and supported 340,000 jobs in 2023

[11] Projected | CMS; Patients vs. Profits: Who Wins in the Traditional U.S. Dialysis System? - Strive Health; Florida Elder Care Costs for 2023 | Senior Care Options Compared (assistinghands.com). Average Retirement Income in 2024 | The Motley Fool, ACS and Bureau of Labor Statistics.

[12] Actuarial Status of the Social Security Trust Funds, SSA, May 2024. Reports from the Board of Trustees (ssa.gov). States' Unfunded Pension Liabilities Persist as Major Long-Term Challenge | The Pew Charitable Trusts (pewtrusts.org); REMI PI+ Forecast, SFRPC 2032-2060, 2023 Fixed Local Dollars. Arnold, R. (2015). Politics at the Precipice: Fixing Social Security in 2033. *The Forum*, 13, 18 - 3.

[13] fau.edu/ocean-economy/documents/ocean-economy-pages-annual-report.pdf#:~:text=Marine Industries 30%2C000 jobs Marine,jobs Marine %26 Coastal Tourism, 2025

(3.9% of Florida GDP).[14] Port Everglades likewise generated **$28.1 billion** in annual business activity by 2024.[15] South Florida is also home to major marine R&D centers (NOAA, universities) that support innovation. Overall, current research and economic planning underscore that Florida's **"blue economy"** is a growth cluster: investing in port automation, habitat restoration, and aquaculture, and enhancing marine science will be key to sustaining this ocean-driven prosperity.[16]

Additional emerging issues include:

- **Rising Cost of Housing and Affordability**
- **Insurance Market Stress Affecting Investment and Housing Supply**
  Rising premiums deter development, including affordable multifamily projects, and influence household migration
- **Sea Level Rise and Extreme Weather Events**
  Water risk as a binding growth constraint.
  Ocean warming is likely to adversely affect fisheries, clean drinking water.
- **Reshaped Supply Chains and Trade Relations**
  Global competition for critical materials, the impacts of trade policy, and skilled labor is altering U.S. industrial policy and local development priorities.

Evaluation of Progress on Action Plan and Goals

South Florida's economy and its many economic development stakeholders made progress in meeting the Goals of the South Florida Economic Development District (EDD) CEDS. Progress toward the region's economic goals is summarized below.

Priority Goal 1: Cultivate a competitive economy and foster economic mobility.

- Growing enrollments and graduation rates in technical professions show that the region made progress in investing in its workforce[17]

[14] PortMiami's 2023 Economic Impact Tops $61 Billion - Florida Ports Council
[15] Fort Lauderdale Port - Official Port Everglades Site - Fort Lauderdale, Florida
[16] fau.edu/ocean-economy/documents/ocean-economy-pages-annual-report.pdf#:~:text=Marine Industries 30%2C000 jobs Marine,jobs Marine %26 Coastal Tourism. 2025
[17] Florida Department of Education, Fact Books, 2021 and 2022. Reports (fldoe.org).

- Unemployment declined modestly from 2022–2023, but wage and cost pressures prevented broad-based improvement in living standards.
- Labor force participation rate rebounded since 2021 and now exceeds state and national average participation rates.
- Significant employment gains were made in Manufacturing, and Professional and Business Services industries.

Priority Goal 2: Create vibrant and connected places to increase the overall quality of life.

- Brightline service commenced from South Florida to Orlando, connecting the State's largest regional economy to the I-4 corridor.

Priority Goal 3: Design, Construct, and Maintain resilient infrastructure to support sustainable business and population growth.

- The region lost ground in creating affordable workforce and market-rate housing.

Priority Goal 4: Regional Collaboration and Coordination

The EDD is actively participating in regional efforts, such as the Risk and Resilience Tech Hubs, obtaining funding for implementation projects under the U.S. Department of War's Military Installation Risk and Resilience (MIRR) initiatives, and statewide initiatives such as leading a regional and then a statewide Resilient Benefit-Cost Analysis framework to support more robust decisions about infrastructure investment that saves money, jobs, and lives.

In addition to hosting a conference on *The Business Case for Transit-Oriented Development with Affordable and Workforce Housing*, the primary South Florida EDD CEDS-related economic development activity was preparing for and initiating the CEDS update and outreach strategic plan development. Staff evaluated the goals of the CEDS and aligned the objectives with strategies to improve the region's economic resilience and ability to respond to future economic shocks. These strategies will be reviewed by the CEDS Committee, and projects to implement the strategies will be identified by the CEDS Committee in the next year. The Draft 2025 Annual Progress Report will be released for a public comment period on October 21, 2025, once the SFRPC Council authorizes the Report's release.

Highlights of Key Changes to The Regional Economy, Priorities, and Adjustments of Strategies to the CEDS

The South Florida Economic Development District Economic Indicator Dashboard (Table 1) highlights positive recent economic trends across Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe. Median household income increased in all counties, with South Florida's average rising from $60,670 to $67,631 (11.5%). Per capita income also grew, particularly in Monroe County, which saw an increase from $109,873 to $119,138 (8.4%). Employment and labor force participation experienced moderate growth, with regional employment rising from 3.2 million to 3.4 million (6.25%) and the labor force expanding from 2.4 million to 2.6 million (8.3%). Housing availability increased slightly, with 23,900 additional units across the region (1.2%). The poverty rate showed minor improvements, decreasing from 14.2% to 12.8% across South Florida. Overall, the region is seeing gradual economic improvements, particularly in income growth and employment.

Data Issues in Updating This Annual Report

This report often compares the EDD counties and the broader EDD region ("South Florida") with Palm Beach County, given its close proximity and influence on the regional economy. When Palm Beach County is included, the combined area is referred to as either the Miami–Fort Lauderdale–West Palm Beach Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) when the SFRPC includes Monroe County in MSA statistics.

Annual data for individual counties is not always available through 2024. For consistency, the SFRPC updated data to 2024 only when complete datasets were available for the entire MSA or for all three EDD counties. In cases where county-level data were incomplete or delayed, MSA-level data were used because they represent the only regional dataset currently available. Some data releases have been postponed, particularly for Monroe County, due to small sample sizes and data suppression.

Table 1: South Florida Economic Development District Economic Indicator Dashboard*

	Broward		Miami-Dade		Monroe		South Florida	
	2021	**2023**	**2021**	**2023**	**2021**	**2023**	**2021**	**2023**
Median Household Income**^**	$70,834	$74,367	$66,692	$72,030	$79,459	$85,639	$68,774	$73,232
Per Capita Income**^**	$ 66,274	$70,982	$65,052	$75,182	$118,434	$130,525	$66,493	$74,383
Payroll Employment (Millions)*	1.2	1.3	1.9	2	0.06	0.06	3.2	3.4
Housing Units (Thousands) **^**	864.4	868.1	1,084	1,104.0	54.4	54.8	2,003.0	2,026.9
Updated Data	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**
Population^ (Millions)	2.0	2.0	2.7	2.8	0.08	0.08	4.7	4.8
Households[#] (Thousands)	768.5	772.0	999.0	1,000.0	37.3	37.1	1,804.7	1,812.6
Labor Force (Millions)*	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.5	.05	.05	2.5	2.6
Poverty Rate*	12.2%	11.5%	14.9%	13.9%	9.4%	9.7%	14.2%	12.8%
High School Graduation Rate[+]	87.2%	88.7%	88.2%	90.3%	88.2%	89%	86.3%	88.1%

^American Community Survey 1 Year Estimates.; US Census, American Community Survey. *Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed via FRED, St Louis Federal Reserve Bank. Sources are inconsistently updated or not updated at all since the 2024 CEDS due to the delays in the release of many statistical series. Florida Department of Education. Annual Estimates of Housing Units for Counties in Florida. #University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 2025. +Florida Department of Education: www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7584/urlt/GradRates2324.pdf

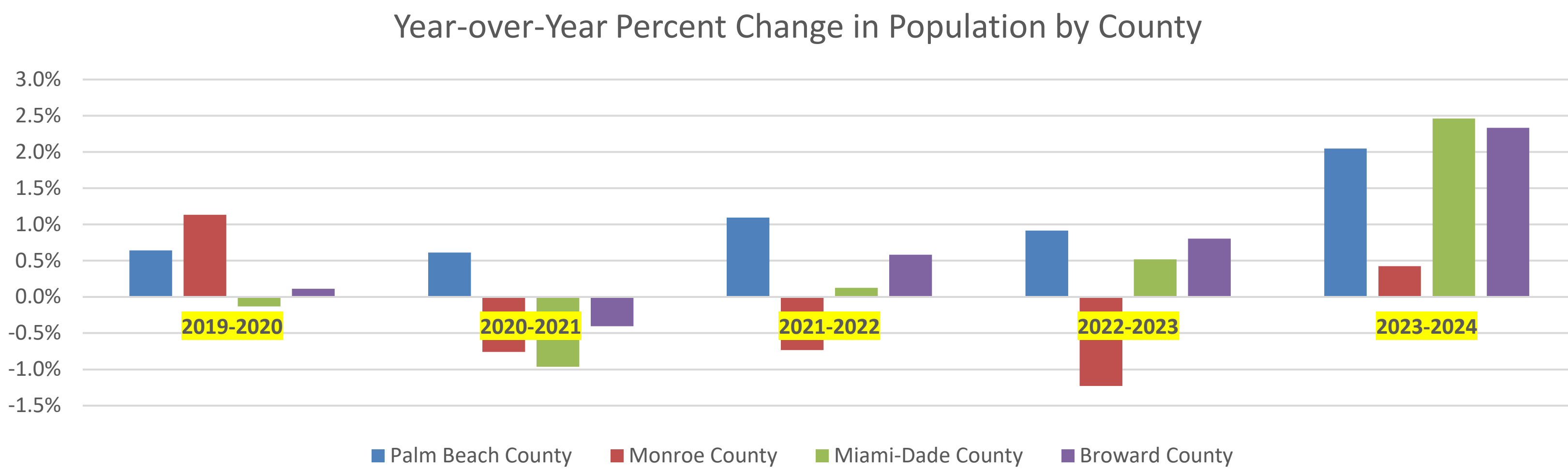
Unusually, Monroe County's per capita income is much higher than its median household income. This is because the county has many affluent retirees, high-wealth individuals, and second-home owners whose large investment and retirement incomes push up the average, but do not affect the midpoint (median) household much. Additionally, with small average household sizes, higher total incomes are divided among fewer people, inflating the per capita metric even more. As a result, the region's wealth concentration and small households cause per capita income to significantly exceed the median household figure.

Economic Context

South Florida's recent demographic and economic trends reveal both the region's dynamism and key structural challenges. Throughout the early 2020s, population growth patterns shifted dramatically as Monroe County (Florida Keys) experienced a sharp, short-lived post-pandemic influx, while, Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach counties maintained modest or variable growth. At the same time, the region's economy remained resilient, with steady gains in GDP and labor force participation, but uneven recovery and persistent unemployment gaps underscore continued vulnerabilities in Miami's service-driven labor market and the need for broad-based, inclusive growth.

<u>Percent Change in Population</u>

Figure 2: Year-Over-Year Percent Change in Population by County

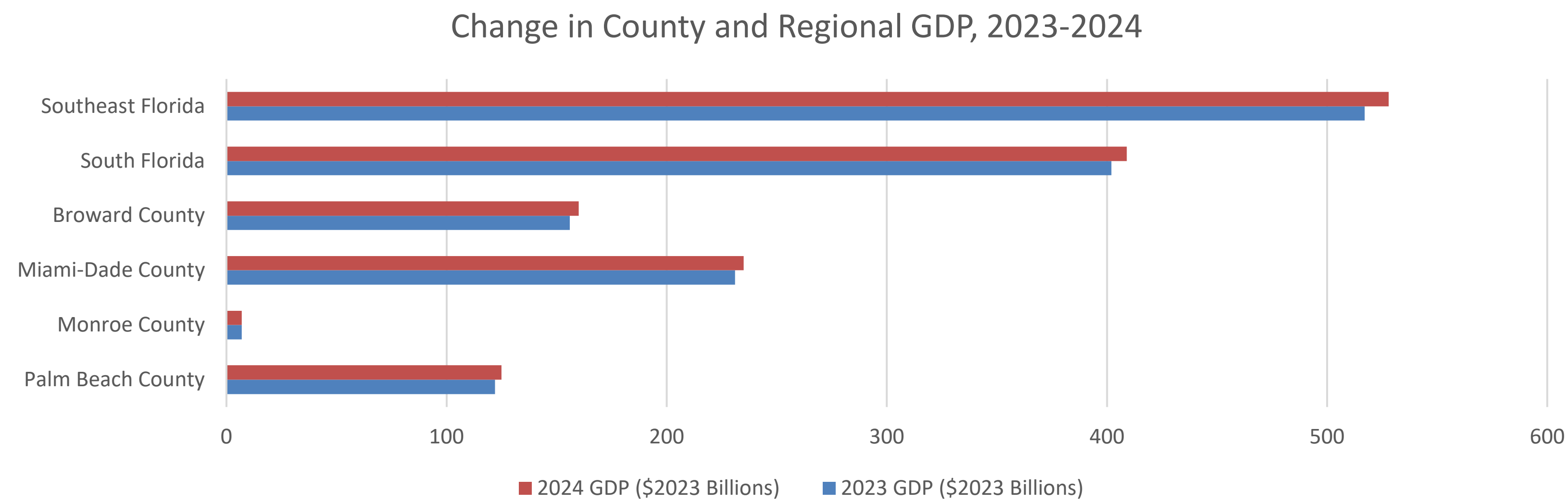


Source: University of Florida BEBR, 2025.

According to the American Community Survey, Monroe County experienced the most significant population growth by percentage among South Florida counties during the 2019-2020 period, with a nearly 10% increase as shown in the chart's dramatic red bar for that time period. This sharp rise contrasts with the more modest growth patterns observed in other major South Florida Economic Development District counties during the same period. Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach all maintained relatively smaller population changes during 2020-2021, with growth rates well below 2%. The chart reveals that Monroe County's exceptional growth was largely a one-time phenomenon as its population growth moderated significantly in subsequent years (2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024), returning to levels more comparable with the other counties.

Throughout the entire period shown, Palm Beach County demonstrated the most consistent positive growth among the four counties while Broward and Miami-Dade counties showed more variable patterns, including some periods of slight population decline in recent years, likely driven by continuing high housing costs.

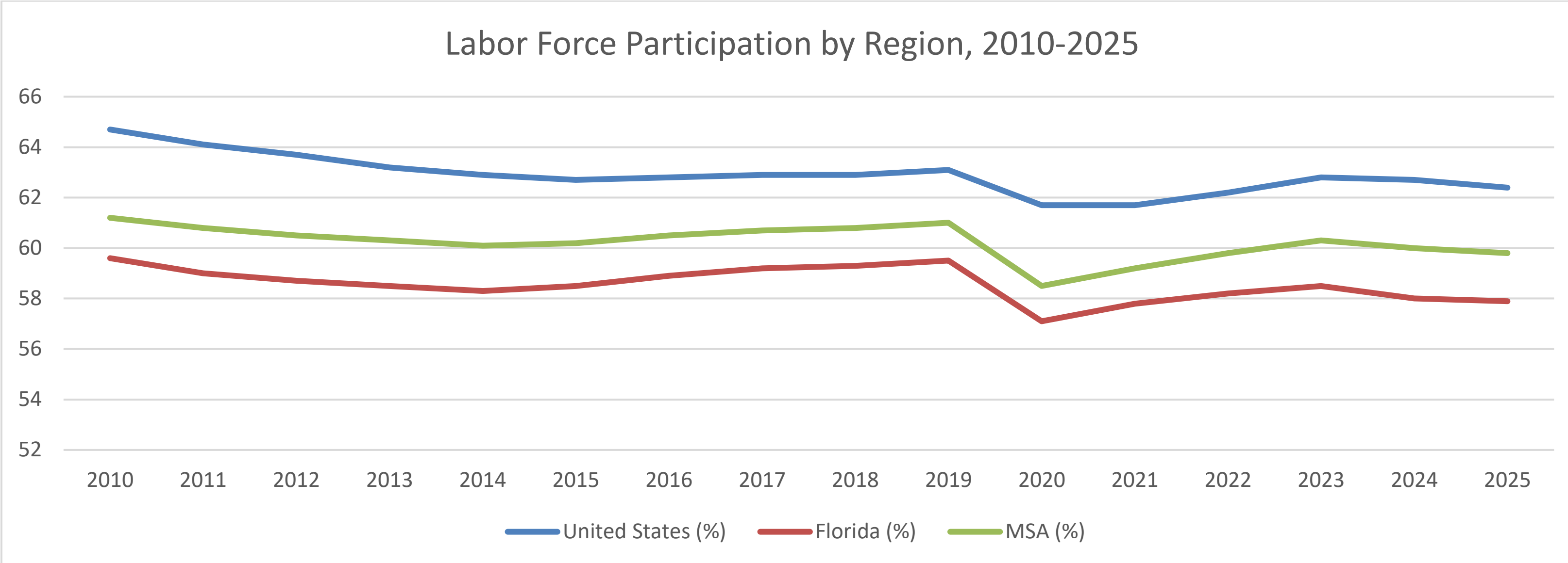
Figure 3: Annual South Florida Economic Development District and Palm Beach Gross Domestic Product, 2023-2024



Source: St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank, 2024. SFRPC Staff analysis, 2025.

Figure 3 shows annual changes in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) across the South Florida Economic Development District (EDD) in 2023 and 2024, measured in billions of 2023 dollars. Regional GDP expanded from $517 billion in 2022 to $528 billion in 2023, a modest 2.1% increase. Miami-Dade, the region's largest economy, grew from $231 billion to $235 billion (1.7%). Broward County rose from $156 billion to $160 billion (2.6%), while Palm Beach advanced from $122 billion to $125 billion (2.5%). Monroe County remained stable at $7 billion.

Figure 4: Labor Force Participation Rate 2010-2025 in the United States, Florida, and Southeast Florida (MSA).



Source: St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank (FRED), 2025. [Featured LAU Searchable Databases : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics]. Staff calculations for Southeast Florida in 2025.

Figure 4 compares labor force participation rates for the United States, Florida, and the Miami–Fort Lauderdale–West Palm Beach Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) from 2010 through 2025. The MSA includes Palm Beach County, which raises the regional average slightly above the labor force participation rate for Monroe, Miami-Dade, and Broward counties and the South Florida EDD.

Nationally, labor force participation declined from approximately 64.7 percent in 2010 to a pandemic-era low near 61.5 percent in 2020, then gradually recovered to about 62.6 percent by mid-2025. Florida's trajectory was similar but modestly stronger after 2021, with participation averaging between 63.0 and 63.5 percent. The state's higher labor force participation rate reflects sustained labor demand across logistics, healthcare, construction, and population-serving industries.

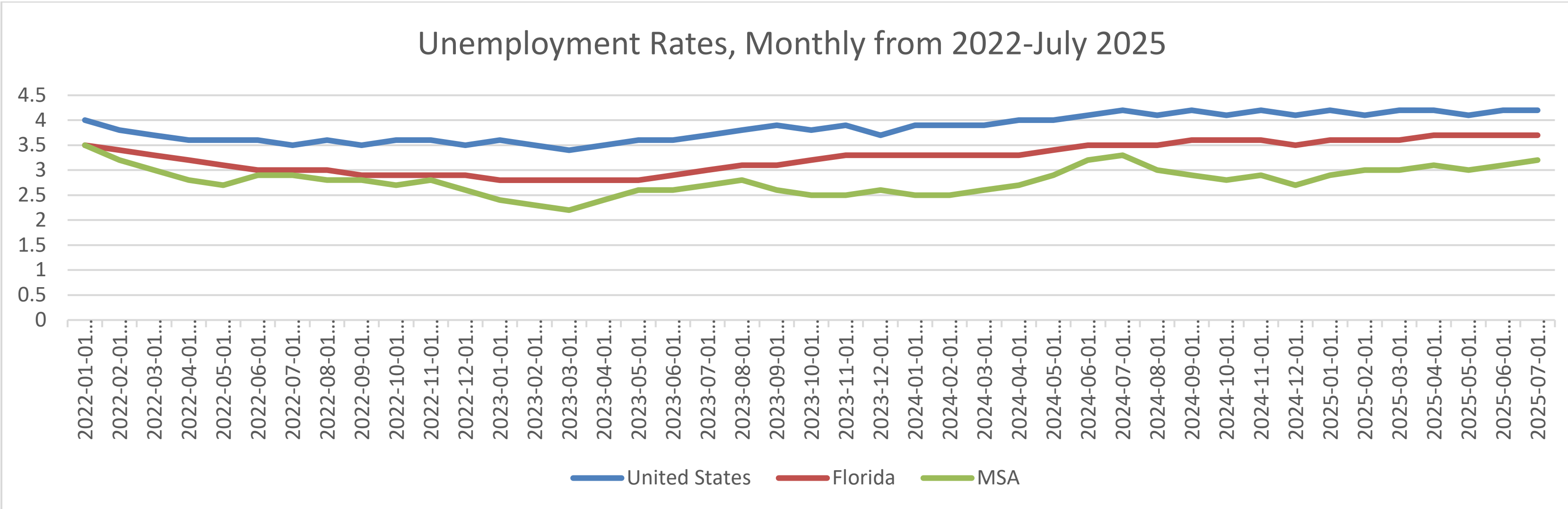
By 2025, Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties exceeded the labor force participation rate of the United States and Florida. After trailing the United States and Florida through most of 2010–2019 and dropping sharply 2020, the four counties rebounded faster from 2021 onward. The rebound reflects strong job growth and continued in-migration of international working-age residents, alongside a recovery in year-round service employment. High housing costs and long commutes remain headwinds but have not prevented the recent outperformance.

Despite these constraints, the region maintains a tight labor market characterized by low unemployment and strong population inflows of working-age adults. Increasing the labor force participation rate will require measures that expand affordable housing, improve access to childcare, and enhance public transit connectivity. Workforce initiatives emphasizing training and credentialing in logistics, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing could raise participation and productivity, supporting more inclusive labor-market growth across Southeast Florida.

Workforce and Labor

South Florida's labor market has emerged as one of the region's key economic strengths in recent years, consistently outperforming state and national benchmarks in both job creation and unemployment rates. From the pandemic recovery through mid-2025, the Miami–Fort Lauderdale–West Palm Beach MSA maintained historically low unemployment, fueled by strong demand in core sectors like trade, logistics, construction, and health care. This sustained labor market resilience not only highlights the region's diverse economic base but also underscores emerging challenges around labor shortages, rising wage pressures, and affordability that will shape workforce strategies in the years ahead.

Figure 5: U.S. and Florida Unemployment Rates, 2022- July 2025



Source: FloridaCommerce, 2024. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2025.

Figure 5 tracks unemployment rates for the United States, Florida, and the Miami–Fort Lauderdale–West Palm Beach MSA (MSA) between 2020 and mid-2025. Throughout this period, the MSA generally maintained lower unemployment rates than both the United States and Florida averages, pointing to sustained labor market strength in the region. This relative resilience reflects the MSA's economic composition, anchored in trade, logistics, construction, and consumer services, which recovered quickly after the pandemic-driven downturn.

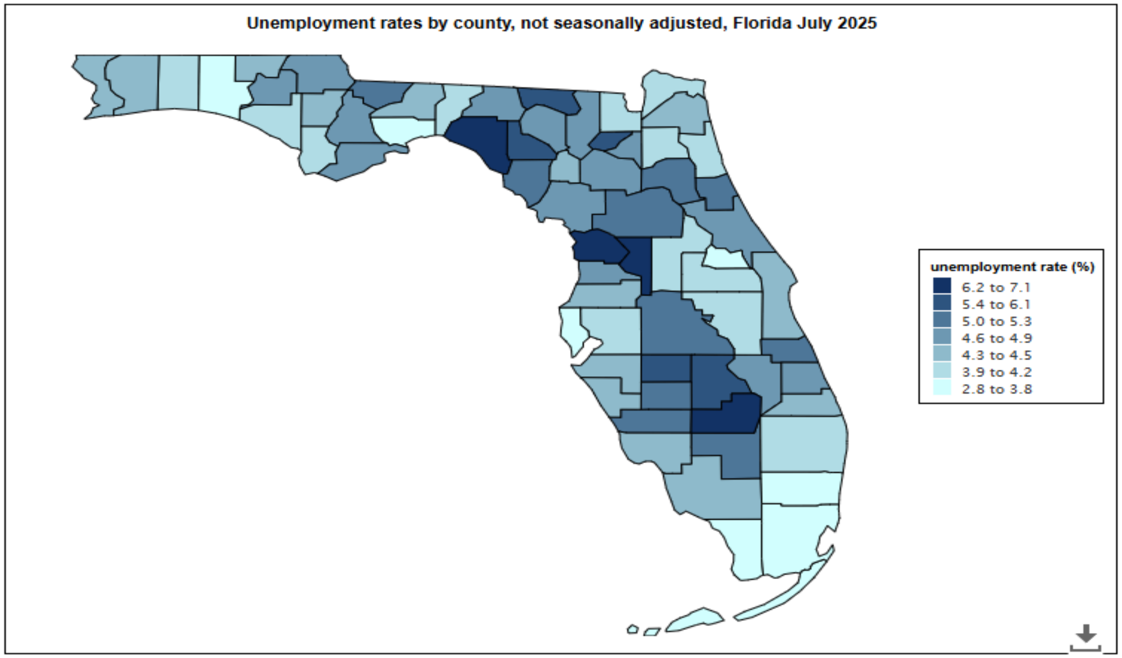
From 2022 onward, the United States and Florida show a gradual upward drift in unemployment, hovering around 4.0% by 2025. In contrast, the MSA's unemployment rate remains closer to 3.0 – 3.5%, suggesting tighter labor markets. This divergence implies persistent demand for workers across key industries such as health care, finance, logistics, and hospitality. While beneficial for employment stability, it also raises the risk of labor shortages, wage inflation, and recruitment challenges for employers in the region.

Implications for South Florida

1. **Labor Market Tightness** – The consistently lower unemployment in the MSA signals structural labor shortages. Employers may face rising costs as they compete for workers, especially in growth industries like construction, health care, and logistics.
2. **Housing and Cost Pressures** – Strong labor demand, combined with rising wages, can fuel housing affordability concerns. This may limit long-term labor supply if workers are priced out of the region.
3. **Resilience with Risk Exposure** – While the MSA demonstrates stronger labor market resilience than the state or nation, its dependence on cyclical sectors such as tourism and real estate leaves it exposed to downturns. Any sharp correction in these industries could quickly reverse the trend.
4. **Policy Considerations** – Workforce development, housing affordability strategies, and economic diversification will be critical to sustaining the MSA's competitive labor market advantage while mitigating inflationary pressures and supply constraints.

Overall, the unemployment trends suggest that South Florida continues to enjoy a relatively robust labor market compared to state and national benchmarks. However, potential risks include exposure to cyclical downturns in interest rate-sensitive sectors like real estate and structural mismatches in affordability and workforce housing that could undermine labor market participation over time. Continued investment in workforce development, transit access, and housing affordability will be essential to sustaining low unemployment while promoting more inclusive economic growth.

Figure 6: Unemployment Rate by County, State of Florida, July 2025



Source: [Local Area Unemployment Statistics Map (bls.gov)](). July 2025.

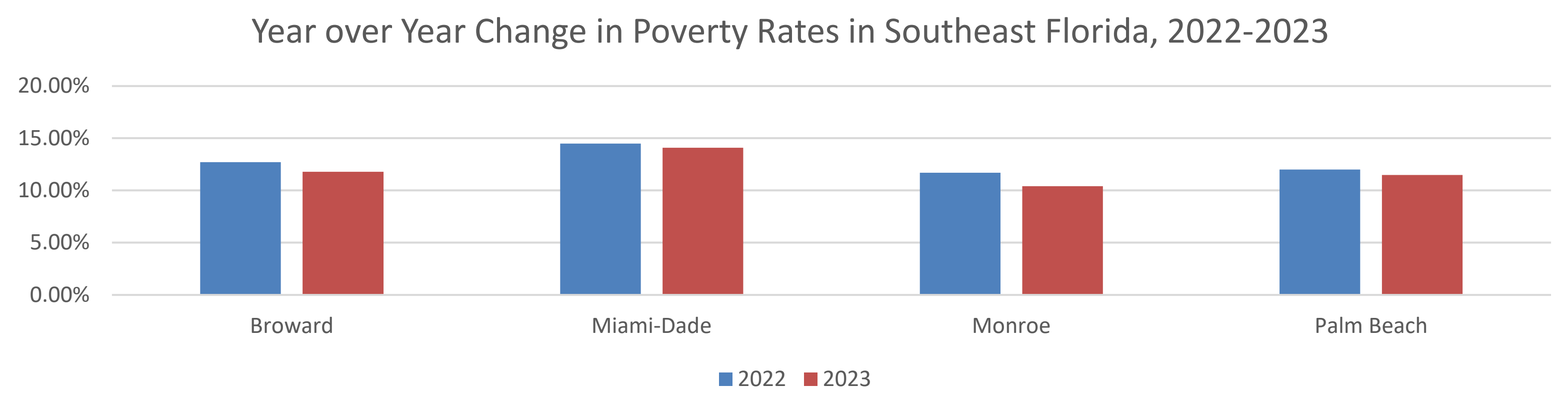
The county-level unemployment map for Florida (July 2025, not seasonally adjusted) shows substantial geographic variation in labor market conditions. Counties in South Florida, specifically Miami-Dade (3.1%), Monroe (2.4%), Broward (3.6%), and Palm Beach (3.8%), exhibit some of the lowest unemployment rates in the state. This reflects relatively strong job creation, the continued in-migration of labor, and diversified industry bases in these metro areas. Monroe's position as the county with the lowest unemployment rate statewide suggests a tight labor market, likely due to seasonal demand, limited labor supply, and a high reliance on service-sector employment.

Broward and Palm Beach counties also fall into the lower third of unemployment rates across Florida, pointing to sustained labor market strength even in the face of broader economic uncertainty. Their performance supports the broader conclusion that the tri-county South Florida region continues to outperform many rural and interior counties. These inland counties, particularly in the Panhandle and parts of

North Central Florida, display higher unemployment rates, suggesting structural challenges such as lower educational attainment, weaker industry diversity, and population stagnation or decline.

Overall, the spatial distribution of unemployment in the map underscores the economic advantages of urbanized, coastal counties with diversified service economies and strong population growth. It also highlights the persistent labor market disparities across Florida's regions, reinforcing the need for targeted workforce investments and economic development strategies in lagging counties, particularly those facing persistent rural underemployment and outmigration. For South Florida, the challenge will be maintaining low unemployment while addressing issues of wage stagnation, affordability, and labor force participation.

Figure 7: Year over Year Change in Poverty Rates in Southeast Florida, 2022-2023



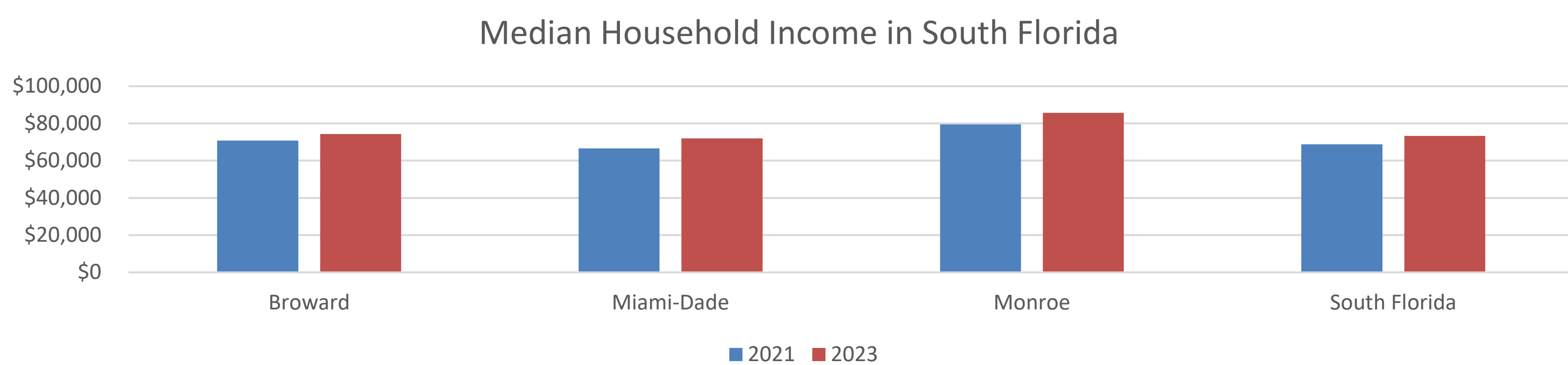
Source: St Louis Federal Reserve, 2025

The year-over-year change in poverty rates from 2022 to 2023 for Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach counties shown in Figure 7 reveals uneven socioeconomic recovery across South Florida. Miami-Dade experienced the sharpest increase in poverty, rising by over 3%, likely reflecting the region's exposure to cost-of-living pressures, high housing burdens, and continued income inequality despite a tight labor market. This indicates that economic growth has not translated evenly into improved living conditions for all residents, particularly lower-income households or those in informal or low-wage sectors.

Monroe County, which had relatively low poverty rates in 2021, saw the second-largest percentage increase. While its labor market remained tight with low unemployment, this rise in poverty may reflect a mismatch between job quality and cost of living. Monroe's reliance on seasonal and tourism-dependent employment may also expose residents to volatility in income stability. In contrast, Broward and Palm Beach counties saw more moderate increases, suggesting a more balanced post-pandemic recovery, supported by a broader mix of mid- and high-wage employment sectors.

These poverty trends underscore persistent regional inequality despite low unemployment. Rising wages have not fully offset inflationary pressures, especially for housing, energy, and food. The data implies that economic development strategies in South Florida must address not only job creation but also wage quality, affordability, and access to support services. Without targeted intervention, even strong labor markets may coexist with rising material hardship for vulnerable populations.

Figure 8: South Florida Economic Development District (EDD) Median Household Income



Source: St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank, 2024. SFRPC Staff analysis, 2025. Median household income is derived from the 5-year American Community Survey and is not currently updated beyond 2023.

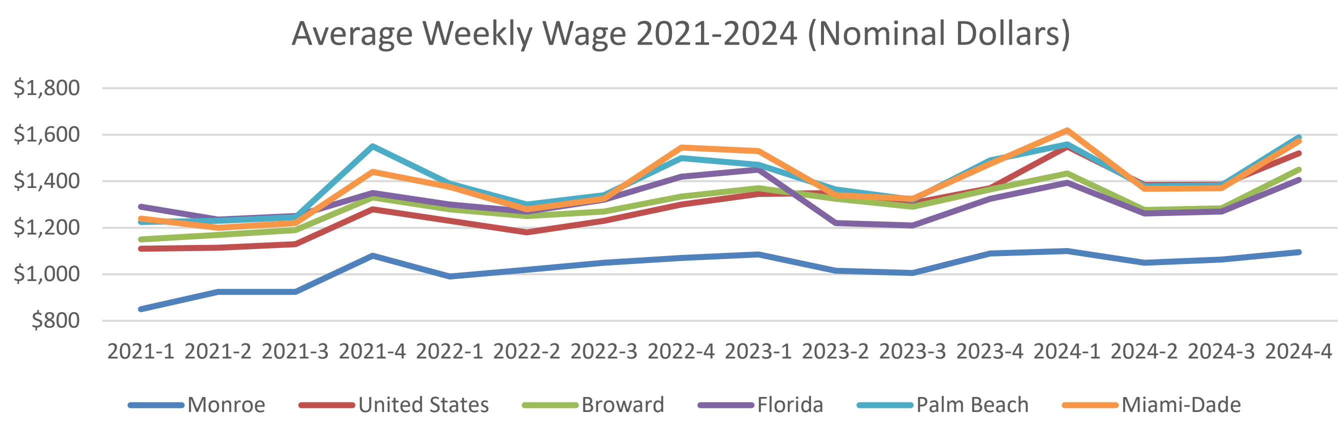
Across the South Florida Economic Development District (EDD) counties in Figure 8 show steady gains in median household income between 2021 and 2023, but with notable variation in levels and growth rates.

- **Broward County** rose from roughly $60,000 in 2021 to about $65,000 in 2023, reflecting moderate but consistent growth aligned with statewide patterns.

- **Miami-Dade County** recorded the lowest median income of the three, increasing from just under $55,000 to around $59,000. This continues to highlight structural disparities in Miami-Dade, where service-sector concentration and income inequality constrain household earnings despite its role as the region's largest economy.
- **Monroe County** maintains the highest median household income, climbing from approximately $80,000 in 2021 to $85,000 in 2023. These elevated incomes reflect a mix of high-cost housing, affluent second-home ownership, and a limited but high-value labor market.
- The **South Florida regional average** increased from about $59,000 to $67,000, demonstrating broad-based upward movement, though the regional figure is pulled upward by Monroe's outlier status and Broward's steady growth.

Overall, the data confirms resilience and rising household incomes across the region, but the gap between Miami-Dade and its neighboring counties remains wide. This persistent divergence underscores ongoing affordability pressures for lower-income residents in Miami-Dade and highlights the need for higher wages in lower paying occupations. Monroe's high incomes also mask affordability challenges, since housing costs there outpace local wage structures for many workers.

Figure 9: Average Weekly Wages, Miami-Dade-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach MSA, Q1 2021-Q2 2024



Source: [QCEW Data Files : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (bls.gov)](#) , 2025

Figure 9 illustrates the trajectory of average weekly wages from 2021 through 2024 (in nominal dollars) across Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties, alongside Florida and United States benchmarks. Monroe's average wages are low in aggregate due to its tourism base, though select industries (health care, utilities) pay above regional averages. This trend highlights the problem of low wages in tourism, part-time, and seasonal work, as well as a large share of non-wage income among residents. By contrast, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties recorded the highest wage levels in the region, with average weekly earnings approaching or exceeding $1,500 at various points in 2022 and early 2023 before softening later in the period.

Notably, the data shows a sharp spike in average wages across all counties in late 2021 and early 2022, likely reflecting post-pandemic labor market tightness, stimulus-related effects, and upward wage pressures in competitive sectors. This was followed by modest corrections in 2023 before a broad recovery by the end of 2024. Broward County tracked closely with the Florida state average, suggesting a stable, middle-tier wage structure relative to its regional peers. U.S. wages remained relatively smooth and higher than Florida overall, reinforcing the state's persistent wage gap compared to the national level.

Overall, the data suggest wage volatility in the South Florida region tied to cyclical and structural factors, including the region's exposure to tourism, migration-driven labor demand, and varying industrial compositions. Monroe's persistently low wages point to challenges in aligning labor earnings with high living costs, while the stronger wage performance in Miami-Dade and Palm Beach underscores their role as high-skill employment centers. These wage patterns have implications for regional housing affordability, workforce retention, and the design of economic development strategies targeting inclusive growth.

Table 3: Average Annual Wage by Industry in Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach

Industry Average Wage	Broward County	Miami-Dade County	Monroe County	Palm Beach County
All Industries	$51,702	$51,942	$46,362	$54,165
Accommodation and food services	$35,318	$45,536	$53,973	$38,560
Administrative, support, waste management, and remediation services	$44,723	$33,139	$32,604	$49,296
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	$29,567	$46,737	$26,833	$40,321
Construction	$52,287	$40,619	$49,431	$54,477
Educational services; private	$39,745	$46,301	$33,064	$36,800
Farm	$24,736	$32,338	*Suppressed	$41,315
Federal Military	$36,102	$56,272	$126,464*	$83,497*
Finance and insurance	$57,992	$72,592	$43,426	$66,425
Forestry, fishing, and hunting	$9,166	$23,311	$7,152	$38,389
Health care and social assistance	$53,606	$57,577	$58,540	$53,710
Information	$110,164	$97,445	$52,621	$83,609

Management of companies and enterprises	$112,898	$86,648	$41,773	$136,714
Manufacturing	$71,439	$66,458	$56,096	$85,914
Other services (except public administration)	$24,914	$21,178	$28,720	$30,660
Professional, scientific, and technical services	$70,627	$81,060	$48,332	$76,426
Real estate and rental and leasing	$16,892	$15,022	$14,851	$19,079
Retail trade	$44,764	$44,390	$40,527	$42,941
State and Local Government	$76,811	$78,948	$76,333	$79,249
Transportation and warehousing	$39,215	$42,741	$27,631	$29,551
Utilities	$101,229	$110,830	$109,810	$150,210
Wholesale trade	$98,639	$88,580	$78,909	$99,965

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics; REMI PI+. *Implan, 2025.

The average weekly wage data by county in Table 3 reveals key structural differences in the economies of Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach counties. Palm Beach, though outside the South Florida EDD boundary, serves as a comparative benchmark for regional wage levels, reflecting their concentration of high-value industries such as finance, health care, and professional services. Miami-Dade for example, posts elevated wages in sectors such as trade, logistics, and transportation, aligned with its role as a global logistics and commerce hub.

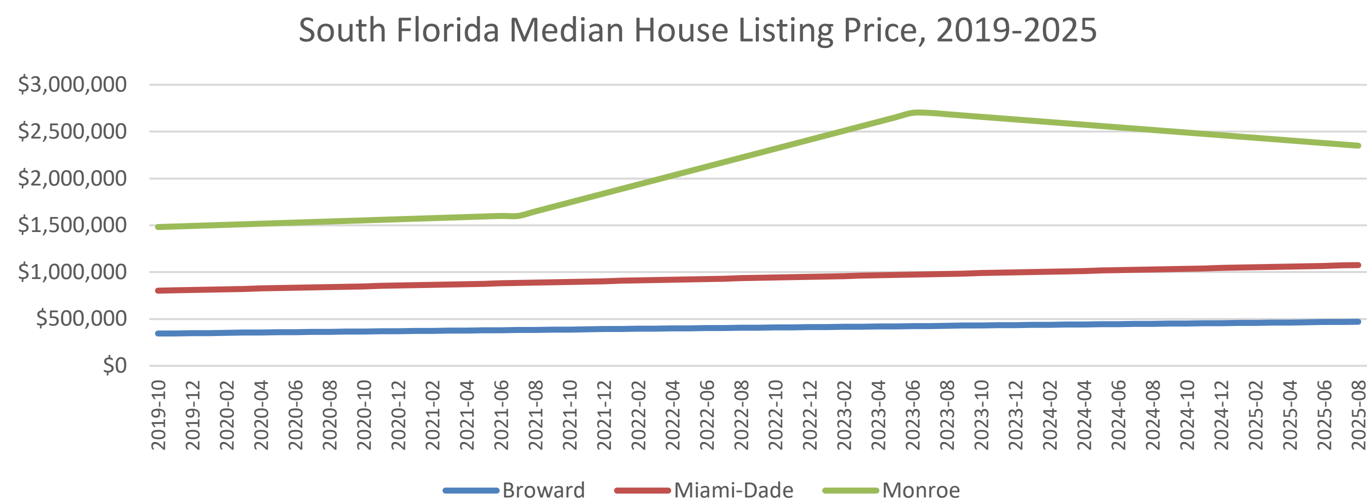
In contrast, Monroe County exhibits significantly lower average wages in nearly every sector, particularly in accommodation and food services, a dominant industry in the local economy. Despite the high cost of living and property values in Monroe, average wages in hospitality and other service sectors remain well below regional peers, indicating a structural mismatch between wage levels and household affordability. This underscores Monroe's dependence on tourism, seasonal employment, and non-wage income sources (e.g., investments, retirement income).

Broward County generally falls in the mid-range of wage distribution, with stable earnings across sectors such as retail, construction, and local government. While it lacks the wage peaks seen in Miami-Dade and Palm Beach, its diversified employment base and moderate wage levels suggest a relatively balanced labor market. Overall, the wage disparities across counties reinforce the need for tailored workforce development strategies, especially in Monroe, where affordability and wage misalignment present ongoing policy challenges.

Housing and Affordability

South Florida's housing market has experienced significant price escalation and mounting affordability challenges in recent years, reflecting the interplay of population growth, constrained housing supply, and shifting demand patterns across the region. Data from 2019 to 2025 reveal not only divergent trends in median house listing prices among Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties, but also a broader region-wide strain as wages struggle to keep pace with rising housing costs. These persistent pressures underscore the urgent need for coordinated policy, targeted development, and innovative solutions to ensure attainable housing for residents throughout South Florida.

Figure 10: South Florida Median House Listing Price, 2019-2025



Source: FRED, St Louis Federal Reserve Bank, 2025

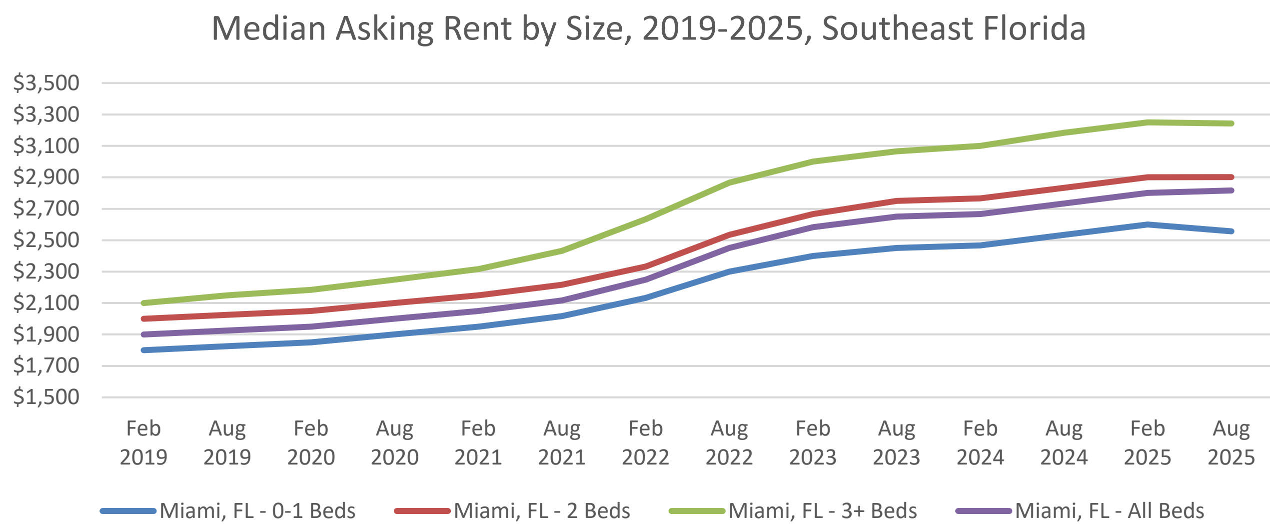
Figure 10 tracks the median house listing prices for Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe Counties from 2019 to mid-2025. The data highlight South Florida's affordability challenges and market divergence across counties. Monroe County (green line) shows the steepest appreciation, with median listings rising from $1.5 million in 2019 to nearly $2.7 million in mid-2023, before moderating to about $2.3 million in 2024–2025. This volatility reflects Monroe's limited housing supply, seasonal demand pressures, and heightened sensitivity to broader financial conditions such as interest rate hikes.

Miami-Dade (red line) and Broward (blue line) display slight upward trends. Miami-Dade prices rose gradually, surpassing $600,000 by mid-2025, while Broward trailed slightly lower but followed a similar trajectory. Both markets reveal sustained affordability pressures as housing demand from in-migration and investment activity continues to outpace supply growth.

The chart underscores the widening housing cost burden across South Florida, particularly acute in Monroe County where extreme pricing volatility reflects structural land constraints and reliance on high-end buyers. Miami-Dade and Broward illustrate more stable but still elevated growth, driven by population inflows, constrained supply, and resilient demand. The recent softening in Monroe's market suggests interest rate tightening has begun to cool overheated conditions, though price levels remain historically high. Collectively, the trends point to enduring affordability concerns the need for regional strategies to expand attainable housing options.

Miami-Dade County (red line) saw steady price growth, with median listing prices rising from roughly $700,000 in late 2019 to over $1.1 million by late 2022, before declining slightly to around $1.05 million by mid-2024. This trend reflects pandemic-era migration, low inventory, and robust investor interest, followed by market cooling amid higher mortgage rates. Broward County (blue line) remained the most affordable market of the three, with median listing prices increasing from approximately $375,000 in late 2019 to about $475,000 by mid-2024. Although less volatile, Broward's price growth reflects similar supply-demand imbalances and affordability strain.

Figure 11: Median Asking Rent, Southeastern Florida, 2019-2025



Source: RedFin Rental Data, 2025.

Overall, the data in Figure 11 suggests that all three counties experienced synchronized price escalations beginning in 2020, driven by post-COVID in-migration, constrained inventory, and speculative demand. The period from late 2022 through 2024 shows a plateau or modest decline in prices, particularly in Monroe and Miami-Dade, consistent with the onset of tighter credit conditions. These dynamics underscore the widening regional affordability gap and the need for coordinated housing and infrastructure strategies across the South Florida region.

Industry/Sectoral Performance

South Florida's economy is characterized by diverse regional strengths and sectoral specializations that reflect its strategic geography and demographic evolution. Analysis of location quotients across Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties highlights distinctive competitive advantages, such as the region's robust maritime, air transportation, and tourism sectors. Recent employment and industry data show sustained growth in construction, healthcare, professional services, and trade, alongside continued dominance of tourism-related industries in Monroe and media, finance, and logistics in Miami-Dade. This evolving industrial landscape underscores both the resilience of the broader regional economy and the need to tailor economic development efforts to local strengths and vulnerabilities.

Table 4: Top Ten Industries by Location Quotients by County

Broward		**Miami-Dade**		**Monroe**	
Industry	Location Quotient	Industry	Location Quotient	Industry	Location Quotient
Water transportation	4.9	Water transportation	16.6	Accommodation	13.5
Air transportation	4.0	Air transportation	3.5	Forestry and Logging; Fishing, hunting and trapping	9.7
Transit and ground passenger transportation	1.9	Radio and television broadcasting	2.8	Museums, historical sites, and similar institutions	7.1
Repair and maintenance	1.8	Transit and ground passenger transportation	2.6	Water transportation	6.3
Insurance carriers and related activities	1.6	Scenic and sightseeing transportation	2.4	Scenic and sightseeing transportation	4.9
Real estate	1.5	Personal and laundry services	2.0	Motion picture and sound recording industries	3.9
Personal and laundry services	1.5	Real estate	1.7	Amusement, gambling, and recreation industries	**3.0**
Administrative and support services	1.5	Securities, Commodity contracts, investments	1.7	Rental and leasing services	2.8
Scenic and sightseeing transportation	1.5	Private households	1.7	Private households	1.7
Private households	1.5	Accommodation	1.5	Couriers	1.6

Source: REMI PI+, 2025.

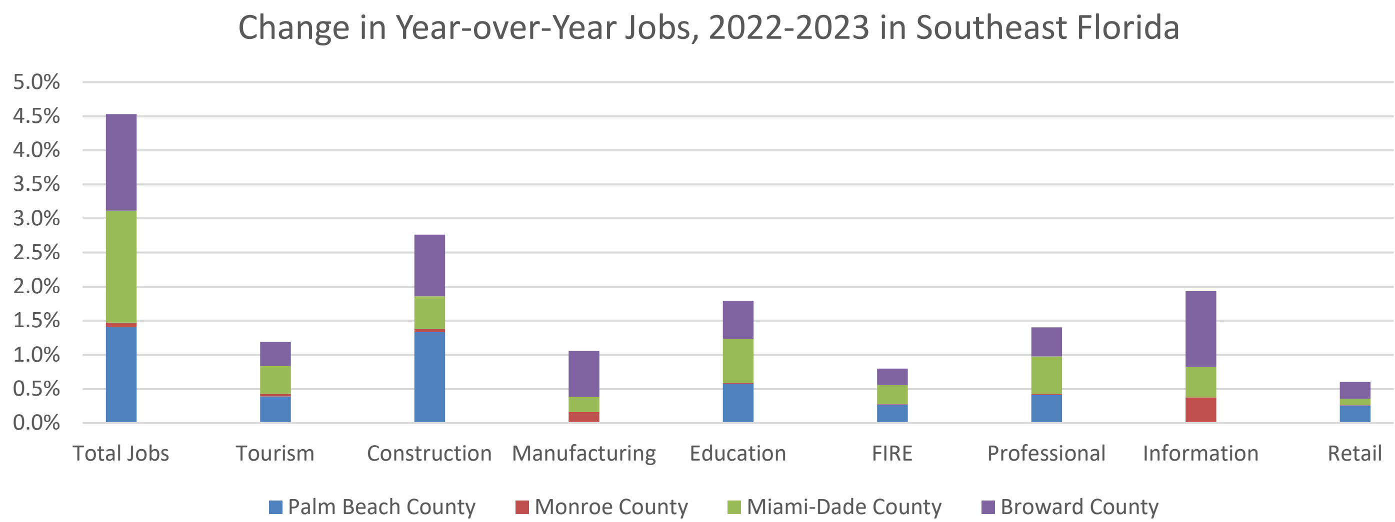
Location Quotients (LQ) measure the concentration of a particular industry in a region compared to a national average. A location quotient above 1 indicates that the industry is more concentrated in the region than nationally, suggesting that the industry is a local economic strength or specialization. Higher LQs can reveal a region's competitive advantages or dependence on certain industries.

The location quotient (LQ) analysis in Table 4 provides a snapshot of the economic specialization of Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties relative to the national average. An LQ greater than 1.0 indicates regional specialization, meaning that a particular industry has a higher concentration locally than it does nationwide. Across all three counties, water transportation emerges as a major economic anchor, with especially high specialization in Miami-Dade (LQ 16.6) and Broward (LQ 4.9). This reflects the region’s strategic role in maritime trade, cruise operations, and logistics. Monroe County also exhibits a high LQ for accommodation (13.5), confirming the central role of tourism and hospitality in its economy.

Miami-Dade shows strong specialization not only in water and air transportation but also in media-related sectors (e.g., broadcasting and streaming), securities and financial services, and content provision, indicating its role as a hub for international business, media, and finance. In contrast, Broward’s top industries include insurance carriers and real estate services, with LQs between 1.5 and 1.6, signaling a balanced but service-heavy regional economy. Monroe stands out for its highly specialized tourism and heritage sectors, such as scenic and sightseeing transportation (LQ 4.9), museums and historical sites (LQ 7.1), and motion picture/sound recording industries (LQ 3.9), all of which support its destination-driven economic model.

Overall, the table highlights the distinct economic identities of each county. Miami-Dade functions as the region’s global-facing financial and logistics center. Broward plays a more diversified, suburban economic role with strong real estate and insurance activity. Monroe’s economy is narrowly specialized and tourism-dependent, with high exposure to seasonal and external demand fluctuations. These differences suggest that regional economic development strategies should be tailored to leverage local strengths while mitigating vulnerabilities, particularly Monroe’s sensitivity to tourism cycles and Miami-Dade’s dependence on trade and finance sectors.

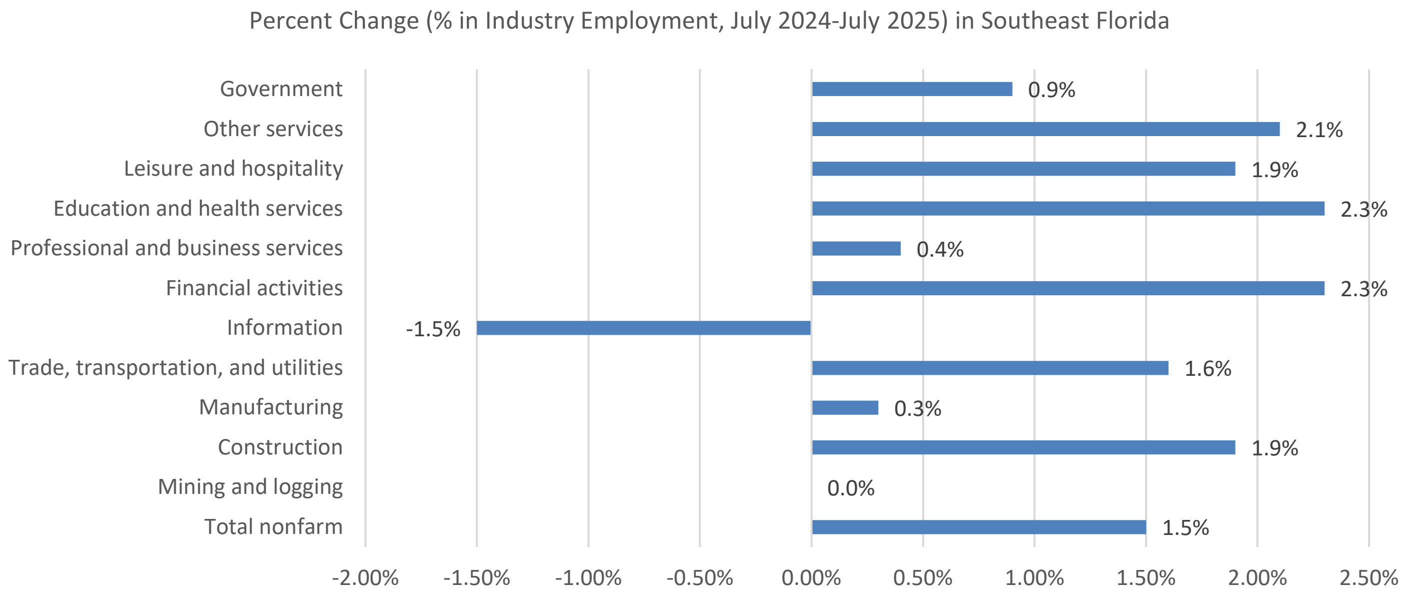
Figure 11: South Florida Percent Change in Jobs, by County, 2021-2023



Source: FloridaCommerce (QCEW) Employment & Wages by County, 2022–2023; Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach Counties, 2024.

This bar chart in Figure 11 illustrates the year-over-year percentage change in jobs across various sectors from 2022 to 2023 in the four South Florida counties: Palm Beach, Monroe, Miami-Dade, and Broward. The "Total Jobs" category shows the highest overall growth, with a near 4.5% increase, driven largely by Broward and Miami-Dade counties. Construction and Professional sectors also saw notable growth, with construction seeing over 3% growth, particularly in Palm Beach and Broward counties. Tourism experienced a smaller increase, with Palm Beach and Miami-Dade leading the gains. Sectors such as Manufacturing, FIRE (Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate), and Education saw more moderate growth across the counties, with Miami-Dade and Broward contributing the most to these sectors. Retail experienced the smallest growth, remaining under 1%. Overall, the chart reflects robust job growth in various sectors, with construction and professional services seeing significant gains.

Figure 12: Change in Employment by Industry July 2023-2024 - Miami-Dade-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach MSA



Source: [Miami, FL, Area Economic Summary (bls.gov)](), 2025

Figure 12 highlights the percent change in employment by industry for the Miami–Fort Lauderdale–West Palm Beach MSA between July 2024 and July 2025. Total nonfarm employment increased by 1.5%, adding more than 42,000 jobs, though growth was uneven across industries.

Education and Health Services (+2.3%) and Financial Activities (+2.3%) recorded the strongest gains, underscoring sustained demand for healthcare, social assistance, and finance-related services tied to South Florida's demographic growth and real estate investment activity. Leisure and Hospitality (+1.9%) and Construction (+1.9%) also advanced, reflecting the region's dependence on tourism and continued investment in housing and infrastructure. Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (+1.6%) expanded steadily, consistent with Miami's role as a logistics and port hub. In contrast, Information (-1.5%) was the only sector to contract, mirroring national trends of restructuring in publishing, telecommunications, and tech services. Professional and Business Services (+0.4%) posted marginal growth, suggesting softer demand for back office and support functions relative to past years. Manufacturing (+0.3%) and Government (+0.9%) grew modestly, while Mining and Logging (0.0%) remained negligible.

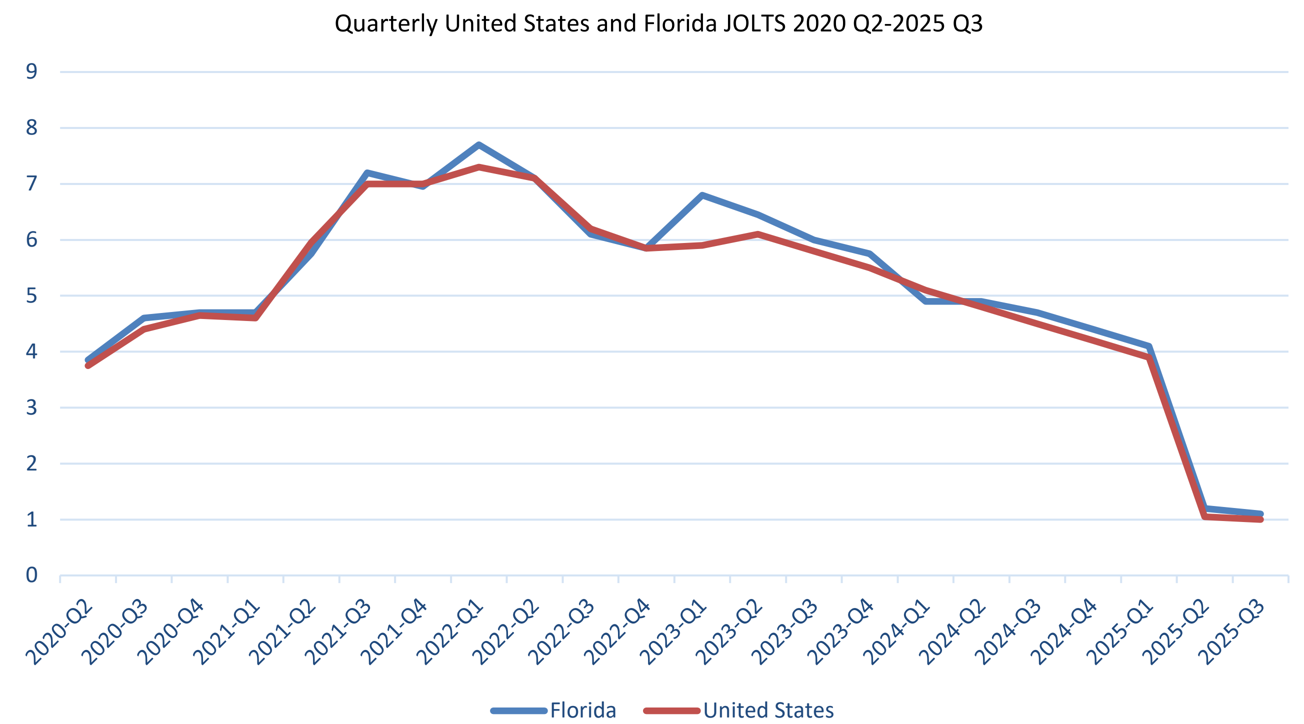
The distribution of job growth reflects South Florida's reliance on population-driven industries such as healthcare, hospitality, and construction, alongside trade and logistics. The contraction in Information highlights structural shifts that may limit future diversification into high-tech industries unless offset by targeted investment. While overall job growth remains positive, the concentration in consumer and service-oriented sectors exposes the region to cyclical risks tied to tourism and real estate markets. Balanced expansion into higher-wage, knowledge-based sectors will be essential for long-term economic resilience.

Overall, the employment structure shown in the chart confirms the Miami metro's position as a service-oriented economy, heavily reliant on trade, tourism, healthcare, and professional services. The balance across multiple mid-sized sectors suggests some degree of resilience, though the high dependency on cyclical industries like hospitality and real estate finance implies exposure to macroeconomic swings. Continued diversification and investment in high-growth sectors, particularly in professional services, tech, and health, will be essential to sustaining long-term economic stability.

National Trends Affecting South Florida's Economy

National economic indicators, such as the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) and sector-specific job openings, as shown in this Section, are critical to understanding the South Florida economy because of the region's integration with broader United States economic trends. JOLTS reflects the demand for labor, showing how national trends in job availability can influence local markets.

Figure 13: Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS): Unemployed persons per job opening ratio (April 2020-August 2025)



Source: [Florida Job Openings and Labor Turnover , April 2024 : Southeast Information Office : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (bls.gov)]

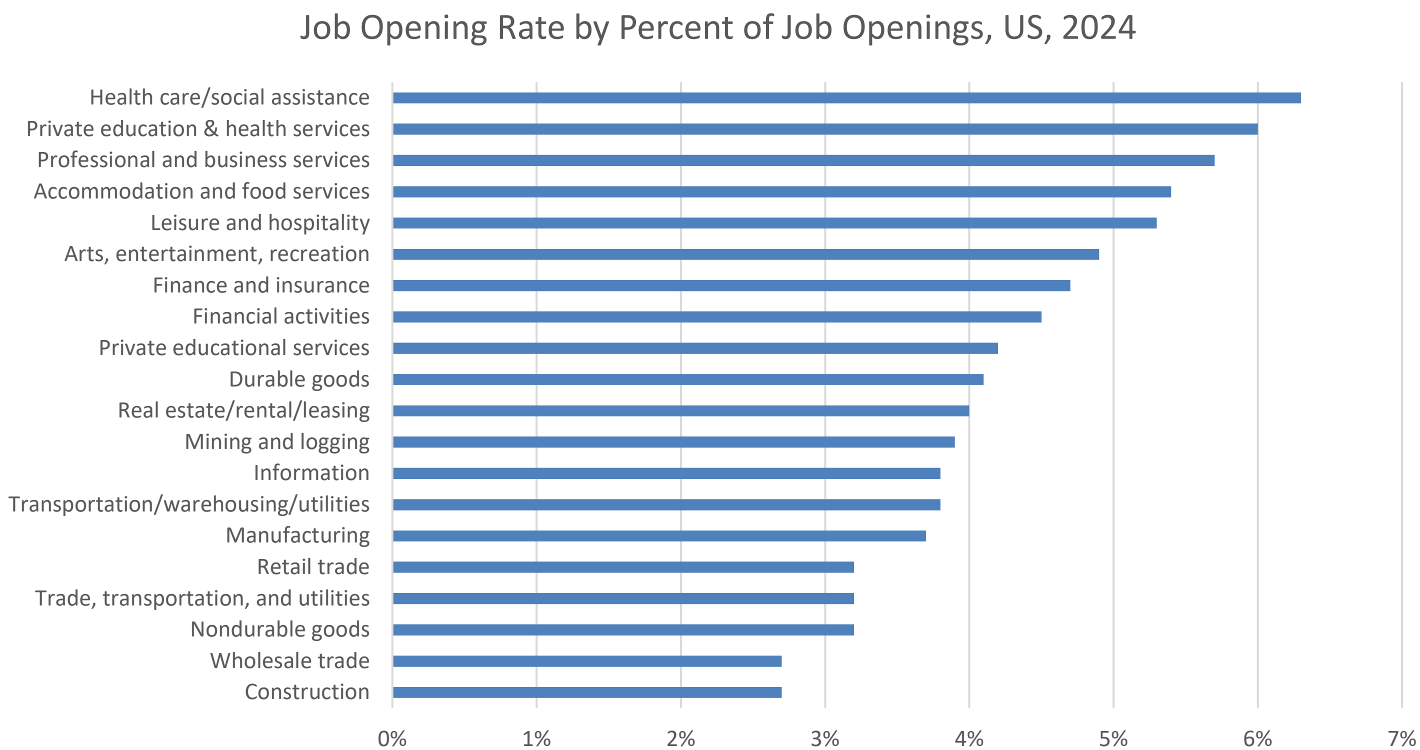
Summary
The JOLTS chart showing the ratio of unemployed persons per job opening from Q2 2020 through Q3 2025 illustrates a major transformation in the labor market across both the United States and Florida. During the early COVID-19 period, the ratio spiked sharply due to mass layoffs, peaking at over 7 unemployed persons per job opening in both geographies by mid-2020. This reflected widespread economic shutdowns and labor displacement. However, by 2021 and especially through 2022, the ratio declined dramatically, reaching a historic low of approximately 1 unemployed person per job opening in Florida by mid-2024, signaling a period of intense labor demand and acute worker shortages.

These patterns have several key implications. First, the rapid post-pandemic tightening of the labor market increased employer competition for workers, particularly in lower-wage service sectors such as hospitality, retail, and logistics. This labor shortage contributed to wage inflation and placed pressure on employers to expand recruitment, increase compensation, and offer more flexible working conditions. In South Florida, this dynamic likely exacerbated affordability issues, as wage gains did not always keep pace with rising housing and living costs. Second, the return to a ratio near pre-pandemic levels by 2025 suggests that labor market conditions may be normalizing, with some rebalancing between labor supply and demand as the pace of economic expansion slows and job openings stabilize.

For economic developers and policymakers, the trajectory shown in the JOLTS ratio underscores the importance of workforce readiness and participation. The extreme imbalance in 2021–2022 revealed vulnerabilities in labor force attachment, skills alignment, and geographic access to opportunity. Florida’s elevated sensitivity to these dynamics, given its large service economy and high in-migration, suggests the need for sustained investments in training, childcare, transportation, and housing affordability to ensure continued labor force resilience in the face of macroeconomic adjustments.

United States job openings are a measure of sectoral economic growth and reflect nationwide demand for skills by sector. The following Figures indicate which sectors are in highest demand, average levels of demand, and lowest levels of demand, respectively. South Florida’s long-term competitiveness depends on aligning labor supply with affordable housing and reliable mobility to sustain productivity and inclusive growth.

Figure 14: U.S Job Openings Percent Change 2024



Source: Job Openings and Labor Turnover, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2025.

The 2024 job market demonstrates strong sectoral variation in opening rates, with service-oriented industries leading demand. The healthcare and social assistance sector is expected to add roughly 2.3 million new jobs, representing about one-third of all job gains projected for the economy [18]which aligns with the chart showing private education and health services having the highest job opening rate at approximately 7%. The accommodation and food services sector also shows robust demand, reflecting the continued recovery and growth in hospitality following pandemic disruptions. Financial activities and arts, entertainment, and recreation sectors maintain relatively strong opening rates

[18] Industry and occupational employment projections overview and highlights, 2023–33 : Monthly Labor Review : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics,

around 5-6%, indicating resilient demand for professional services and leisure activities. These sectors have benefited from both demographic trends and changing consumer preferences.

Transportation and warehousing emerges as a particularly dynamic sector, showing high opening rates that reflect the ongoing transformation of logistics and supply chains. The transportation and warehousing industry had an employment level of 6.6 million in June 2024, accounting for 5 percent of all private-sector jobs, with job postings 10.8% above pre-pandemic levels as of October.[19] Meanwhile, traditional manufacturing and construction sectors show more modest opening rates, consistent with broader economic patterns where these industries face headwinds from automation, supply chain challenges, and cyclical demand fluctuations. Recent data shows employment separations decreased in construction and transportation, warehousing, and utilities,[20] suggesting some cooling in these previously hot labor markets as the economy rebalances from the post-pandemic hiring surge.

In South Florida, which is heavily reliant on sectors like leisure, hospitality, and real estate, changes in national job openings in these sectors directly affect the region. For example, a decline in national leisure and hospitality job openings, as indicated in the JOLTS data, could signal slower demand in South Florida’s key tourism industry, leading to fewer local job opportunities and reduced consumer spending.

Additionally, sectors such as professional business services and construction, which are major employers in South Florida, respond to national economic pressures like interest rate changes, federal spending policies, and workforce shifts. When there are fewer job openings in sectors like construction and manufacturing at the national level, South Florida may experience slower growth in infrastructure projects or a reduction in demand for new residential and commercial developments.

Finally, national job openings in finance, warehousing, and professional services also influence migration patterns, as South Florida attracts workers from other states. A strong or weak labor market in these sectors nationally could either bolster or hinder the flow of workers into the region, affecting local housing demand and economic growth.

Conclusion: Regional Economic Performance and Outlook for South Florida (Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe Counties)

South Florida’s economy continues to demonstrate resilience to recessions, diversification, and gradual structural adjustment amid significant affordability and infrastructure challenges. Between 2023 and 2025, the region maintained strong employment growth and rising incomes

[19] https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2024/keeping-america-moving-employment-in-transportation-and-warehousing-industries/
[20] https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.nr0.htm

while moderating poverty levels, confirming continued recovery and momentum since the pandemic period. Collectively, the EDD region represents a $528 billion economy that remains a core engine of Florida's overall performance, driven by its strategic coastal assets, international connectivity, and concentration of logistics, healthcare, and service industries.

Employment and Labor Market Dynamics

Employment in South Florida grew by approximately 42,000 positions from 2024 to 2025, led by healthcare, logistics, construction, and hospitality. Unemployment remained among the lowest in the state—between 2.4 and 3.6 percent across the counties—demonstrating strong labor demand. Labor force participation has rebounded to roughly 64 percent, surpassing state and national averages and signaling renewed worker engagement. However, employers across all counties report persistent skill gaps in construction trades, logistics, and digital technologies. The tight labor market has generated upward wage pressure without fully offsetting cost-of-living increases, reinforcing the need for expanded workforce training, stackable credentials, and improved childcare and transit access to sustain participation gains.

Income Growth and Inequality

Median household and per capita incomes have grown across all three counties, but disparities remain pronounced. Between 2021 and 2023, Broward's median household income rose from $70,834 to $74,367, Miami-Dade's from $66,692 to $72,030, and Monroe's from $79,459 to $85,639. Per capita income in Monroe exceeds $130,000, reflecting concentrated wealth and small household sizes. The regional poverty rate declined from 14.2 to 12.8 percent between 2023 and 2024, indicating incremental improvement. Yet, widening income inequality—particularly in Miami-Dade—underscores that wage growth has not kept pace with inflation or housing costs.

Housing, Infrastructure, and Cost Pressures

Housing affordability remains the region's defining economic constraint. Median listing prices in 2025 averaged $2.3 million in Monroe, $1.05 million in Miami-Dade, and $475,000 in Broward. Rent burdens exceed 30 percent of income for many households, and limited inventory continues to drive price escalation. These pressures have reduced labor mobility and raised the effective cost of doing business. Transportation congestion, costing the region more than $3 billion annually, compounds the affordability crisis by increasing commuting times and lowering productivity. Addressing these twin challenges will require coordinated regional planning focused on transit-oriented development, workforce housing production, and infrastructure resilience to sustain competitiveness.

Sectoral Strengths and Specialization

The South Florida economy benefits from distinct yet complementary specializations. Miami-Dade remains the state's logistics and finance hub, with high concentrations in water and air transportation, trade, and professional services. Broward's diversified economy supports strong insurance, real estate, and construction sectors. Monroe's specialization in tourism and accommodation continues to drive its local economy but it is exposed to cyclical and climate-related risks. Region-wide, healthcare, education, construction, and hospitality remain the leading job generators, supported by ongoing public and private investment in infrastructure and population-serving services.

Regional Outlook

Through 2026, South Florida is projected to sustain moderate economic growth—slower than the post-pandemic expansion but stronger than national averages. Population growth has stabilized, with continued domestic in-migration to Broward and international inflows to Miami-Dade supporting labor supply. Downside risks include housing price acceleration, federal budget uncertainty, and uneven sectoral demand. Upside potential lies in continued investment in resilience, transit-oriented development, and workforce alignment.

Summary Assessment

As a group, Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe form one of the nation's most dynamic regional economies, defined by high labor participation, global trade linkages, and strong service-sector performance. Yet, farming in the regions is under pressures from development, economic mobility and affordability remain central challenges. Achieving long-term economic growth and the continued diversification of the economy will depend on three priorities: expanding attainable housing tied to transit, aligning workforce training with high-growth industries, and investing in resilient infrastructure to protect assets from environmental and economic shocks. Strengthening these linkages will ensure that South Florida's growth remains inclusive, sustainable, and globally competitive.