

Palm Beach County 2026 Federal Legislative Agenda



Board of County Commissioners

**Sara Baxter, Mayor
Marci Woodward, Vice Mayor
Maria Marino
Gregg K. Weiss
Joel G. Flores
Maria Sachs
Bobby Powell Jr.**



**Joseph Abruzzo, County Administrator
Todd J. Bonlarron, Chief Deputy County Administrator
Tom Nadler, Deputy County Administrator
Ryan Hnatiuk, Intergovernmental Affairs Director
Alessandro Marchesani, Legislative Affairs Director**

PALM BEACH COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



SARA BAXTER
MAYOR
DISTRICT 6
561/355-2206
SBAXTER@pbcgov.org

MARCI WOODWARD
VICE MAYOR
DISTRICT 4
561/355-2204
MWOODWARD@pbcgov.org



MARIA MARINO
DISTRICT 1
561/355-2201
MMARINO@pbcgov.org

GREGG K. WEISS
DISTRICT 2
561/355-2202
GWEISS@pbcgov.org

JOEL G. FLORES
DISTRICT 3
561/355-2203
JGFLORES@pbcgov.org



MARIA SACHS
DISTRICT 5
561/355-2205
MSACHS@pbcgov.org

BOBBY POWELL JR.
DISTRICT 7
561/355-2207
BPOWELL@pbcgov.org

Table of Contents

2026 Federal Legislative Issues

STATEMENT OF AFFILIATIONS.....	5
TRANSPORTATION.....	5
AIRPORTS.....	5
PBI RUNWAY 10L / 28R PAVEMENT REHABILITATION.....	5
NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT RUNWAY EXPANSION.....	5
NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT AIR TRAFFIC TOWER.....	6
CONCOURSE B EXPANSION (PHASE 2B).....	6
PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (PBI) SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS.....	7
PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (PBI) GENERAL AVIATION FEDERAL INSPECTION SERVICES FACILITY.....	7
ROAD CONSTRUCTION, RAIL AND TRAFFIC ENGINEERING.....	8
INFRASTRUCTURE PACKAGES.....	8
FARM TO MARKET ROAD IMPROVEMENT ACT – CR 880.....	8
PASSENGER RAIL ON FEC CORRIDOR.....	9
STATE ROAD 7 EXTENSION.....	9
AUSTRALIAN AVENUE DRAINAGE & ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS.....	9
PALM TRAN.....	10
ENVIRONMENTAL & NATURAL RESOURCES.....	11
WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.....	11
ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS REGULATORY CHANGES.....	11
CORAL REEF PROTECTION AND RESTORATION.....	12
OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING/EVERGLADES OIL DRILLING.....	12
EPA PROPOSED RULE ON WASTE-TO-ENERGY FACILITIES.....	12
GLADES REGION WATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT.....	12
WATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADES.....	13
PUBLIC SAFETY & DISASTER RELIEF.....	13
NEXT GENERATION 911.....	13
CRIMINAL JUSTICE FUNDING.....	14
ANIMAL IMPORTATION.....	14
UNMANNED AIRCRAFT.....	14
HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING.....	14
FEMA FUNDING FOR PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAMS.....	15
FEMA REIMBURSEMENT.....	15
FEMA COASTAL FLOOD MAPS.....	15
NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM (NFIP) REFORM.....	15
GLADES REGION FLOOD INSURANCE MAPS.....	15
FUNDING FOR ENHANCED LIGHTING IN HIGH CRIME AREAS.....	16
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & FINANCE.....	17
OPPORTUNITY ZONE DESIGNATIONS WITH THE U.S. TREASURY.....	17
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT.....	17
INVESTMENTS SUPPORTING REDEVELOPMENT IN DISTRESSED AREAS.....	18
FREE TRADE.....	18

FARMWORKER AND MIGRANT HOUSING.....	18
ROAD TO HOUSING ACT	18
NEIGHBORHOOD HOMES INVESTMENT ACT	20
INCOME LIMITS.....	20
RURAL DEFINITION/USDA HOUSING.....	21
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.....	21
FAIR HOUSING FUNDING INCREASE	21
TITLE IV-E FUNDS.....	22
COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT.....	22
SOBER HOMES	22
OPIOID USE/SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER.....	23
HIV/AIDS FUNDING.....	23
FAMILY CAREGIVING.....	24
FINANCIAL CLIFF.....	24
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FUNDING.....	25
VETERANS' HOMELESSNESS.....	25
VETERANS/PENSION POACHER.....	25
WOMEN INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC) PROGRAM.....	26
FARM BILL REAUTHORIZATION.....	26
SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM/THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM..	26
EDUCATION AND BROADBAND	27
FUNDING FOR THE INSTITUTE FOR MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES (IMLS) AND THE LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY ACT	27
E-RATE AND UNIVERSAL SERVICES FUNDING.....	27
NETWORK NEUTRALITY.....	27
BROADBAND ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY	28
CYBER SECURITY	28
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE	28
FY 2027 POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES.....	30
FY 2026 EARMARKS AWAITING FINAL APPROVAL.....	30
PALM BEACH COUNTY CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS.....	31

STATEMENT OF AFFILIATIONS

National Association of Counties

As a member of the National Association of Counties (NACo), Palm Beach County SUPPORTS the 2026 NACo legislative Program and Guiding Principles unless issues specifically conflict with Palm Beach County's position.

Coalition for Responsible Management of Lake Okeechobee

As a member, Palm Beach County SUPPORTS the 2026 Federal Legislative Priorities of the 16 County Coalition, unless issues specifically conflict with Palm Beach County's position.

Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact

As a member, Palm Beach County SUPPORTS the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact 2026 Federal Climate, Energy and Resilience Legislative Priorities and Principles unless issues specifically conflict with Palm Beach County's position.

TRANSPORTATION

AIRPORTS

PBI RUNWAY 10L / 28R PAVEMENT REHABILITATION

The primary runway at Palm Beach International Airport (PBI), Runway 10L/28R, is experiencing climate-related distress and asphalt pavement deterioration. Runway 10L/28R is the longest runway at PBI and serves air carriers, air cargo, air taxi, general aviation, and military operations. Due to its operational use and climatic impacts, the runway's condition has reached a point where rehabilitation is required via mill and overlay of the asphalt pavement. The project will also re-grade the Runway Safety Area (RSA), rehabilitate runway shoulders, and rehabilitate airfield signage and lighting. Airport Improvement Program (AIP) discretionary and entitlement funding will be pursued for this critical safety project. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has programmed \$6 million for the construction of the project. The estimated project cost is currently \$45 million.

NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT RUNWAY EXPANSION

An Environmental Assessment for the extension of Runway 14/32 at North Palm Beach County General Aviation Airport (F45) from 4,300 to 6,000 feet has been complete and is in the design phase. This critical airfield project will allow the airport to fully serve its intended role as a reliever to the Palm Beach International Airport (PBI) by accommodating larger aircraft with fewer operational restrictions, which will enhance airfield safety and capacity. Actions in support of the runway extension include the extension of parallel Taxiway F, realignment of Aviation Road, realignment of service roads, and related modifications of the

stormwater management system. The project is needed to accommodate existing and forecasted aviation demand at F45 and to enhance operational safety by allowing larger aircraft to operate without restrictions. Frequent Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) at Palm Beach International Airport negatively impacts general aviation users to a greater extent than commercial air carriers due to additional security measures required during TFRs at PBI and the closure of the Palm Beach County Park Airport (LNA), resulting in congestion at nearby airports. Expansion of the runway provides general aviation operators with larger aircraft the ability to safely use F45 as an alternative during TFRs. Funding is currently available for design; however, construction may be delayed due to the lack of available funding. The estimated cost for the project is currently \$35 million.

NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT AIR TRAFFIC TOWER

The recently completed Environmental Assessment for the 1,700-foot extension to Runway 14/32 at the North County General Aviation Airport (F45) includes approval for the construction of an Air Traffic Control Tower. The Palm Beach Gardens City Commission requested Palm Beach County apply for funding for the construction of an Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) in connection with the 1,700-foot runway extension to enhance operational safety. The Palm Beach County Department of Airports (Department) applied for funding through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Federal Contract Tower Program and was unsuccessful. Under the Contract Tower Program, the FAA contracts air traffic control services to the private sector. The FAA provides oversight and monitoring of these contract towers, and the FAA certifies all contract controllers. The runway extension and ATCT at F45 will make the airport a more desirable reliever for PBI and help to reduce impacts of additional Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR) implemented at PBI. The project will also fulfill the commitment to the neighboring communities to maximize the safety and efficiency of operations at F45 and allow the ATCT to be constructed concurrently with the runway expansion project. The Department is continuing to pursue federal funding assistance for the design and construction of the ATCT at F45. The current planning-level cost estimate for design and construction of the project is \$15 million. The Department's current request is for design costs only with an additional application for construction costs in a future budget year. The estimated design cost is currently \$1.2 million.

CONCOURSE B EXPANSION (PHASE 2B)

The Concourse B Expansion project includes an expansion and modernization of Concourse B at Palm Beach International Airport (PBI) to accommodate existing and forecasted demand. The project will increase capacity and renovate an aging terminal facility originally constructed in 1988, enhancing the passenger experience by providing additional space for passenger circulation. The project is currently in the final phase of construction (Phase 2B), which provides for a 46,300 square foot expansion and includes additional space for concourse circulation, passenger hold room seating, a sensory room, concessions areas, office space, and building support infrastructure and the installation of two additional gates to ensure sufficient capacity to support growing passenger demand.

This project creates a strain on the Department of Airports' (Department) limited capital funding sources, delaying other critical projects. Additional funding will allow for the

reallocation of existing local capital funding sources to other critical capital projects to ensure timely completion, including the projects needed for rehabilitation and asset preservation such as concourse roof replacement and the modernization of the PBI Terminal through the creation of a post-security connection between Concourses A/B and C to provide flexibility in airline gate assignments/usage, provide additional post-security circulation and concession space to alleviate existing passenger congestion on the concourses, and enhance airport security by expanding and modernizing security checkpoints and exit lanes through the installation of an automated exit lane breach control system at concourse exits to prevent unauthorized re-entry and avoid costly terminal evacuations.

Approximately \$89 million of the total Phase 2B project cost is eligible for BIL ATP funding with \$10 million previously awarded in FY25; therefore, the Department will be requesting additional discretionary funding in the amount of \$61.2 million through the BIL ATP program.

PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (PBI) SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS

Continued investment in security improvements at Palm Beach International Airport (PBI) is essential to enhance the safety of the traveling public and airport users and stakeholders. The evolving nature of security threats, including technological and physical risks, requires ongoing investment in modern surveillance systems, access control upgrades, and physical barriers and other similar systems. Security improvements will enhance the Department of Airports' (Department) ability to detect and prevent unauthorized access to secure areas of the airport, reduce response times to potential incidents, and maintain compliance with federal aviation security standards. The increased frequency of visits to Palm Beach County by the President of the United States (POTUS) as well as other world leaders and dignitaries, also warrants additional security improvements to ensure PBI is prepared for evolving security threats.

Proposed security improvements include, but are not limited to, the following: installation of an upgraded airfield security fence, vehicle restraint devices/system to prevent breaches of the airfield security fence; fiber optic infrastructure/network for the installation of additional security cameras in remote airfield locations; integrated intrusion detection system within the airfield fence; access control and security camera upgrades to PBI's administrative facility, which houses PBI's emergency dispatch and command center; PBI security office improvements and other related improvements to enhance airport security. The estimated project cost is currently \$30M.

PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (PBI) GENERAL AVIATION FEDERAL INSPECTION SERVICES FACILITY

This project will construct a new General Aviation Federal Inspection Service (FIS) facility on the south side of the airfield at Palm Beach International Airport (PBI). The existing GA FIS facility at PBI is over 30 years old and requires replacement to meet existing and future demand. The new facility will approximately double the square footage of the existing,

implements energy-efficient features to reduce operating costs, and provides an updated layout to enhance capacity and meet Customs and Border Protection standards.

Maintaining separate facilities to process general aviation and commercial service international passengers is necessary to preserve capacity of PBI's commercial terminal. Currently undergoing expansion, the commercial terminal and ramp is congested and unable to accommodate the additional demand from general aviation. The estimated cost for the project is currently \$35 million.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION, RAIL AND TRAFFIC ENGINEERING

INFRASTRUCTURE PACKAGES

Palm Beach County will work with local stakeholders to advocate for and monitor competitive grant and formula programs that benefit our region. This includes existing transportation infrastructure grants, as well as water and wastewater grants, including those programs that address septic to sewer conversion to achieve water quality improvements. Palm Beach County staff will distribute all appropriate potential transportation and resilience grant and funding opportunities.

FARM TO MARKET ROAD IMPROVEMENT ACT – CR 880

Agriculture is essential to the economy and to ensure the well-being and nutrition of our citizens. To transport produce from farms to our tables, trucks and other heavy equipment use rural roads which service agricultural communities. These roads experience severe and accelerated wear and tear and are typically located in areas where the resources and funds to repair these roads can be limited. Compounding these issues is that some of these roadways are built on muck soil which is very conducive to agricultural operations but not as effective as a road base.

Muck soil contains high levels of organic matter which makes it difficult to compact for stability before constructing roads or buildings on top of it. This instability makes it advantageous to de-muck land before beginning construction. The cost of de-mucking is incredibly high and determined based upon the acreage and depth of muck sitting atop of the land. In some areas in the Glades Region, muck can run deeper than 10 feet, making de-mucking particularly cost prohibitive for public works projects and land development.

The state agricultural community and Palm Beach County SUPPORT funding to repair CR 880 as quickly and efficiently as possible, so that agricultural products can be transported safely and quickly from farms to consumers.

CR880 has been updated to an Urban Major Collector, enabling roadway eligibility for federal funding not previously available, such as BUILD grants and Surface Transportation Block Grants.

According to the USDA, trucks are responsible for 83 percent of agricultural freight movements by tonnage. Many trucks in dense agricultural areas can weigh up to 80,000

pounds each. This heavy load has a disproportionate impact on local road and bridge infrastructure in these areas, which leads to costly repairs for local governments. When roads in these heavily agricultural areas deteriorate, America's food supply chain is threatened.

The Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program provides funds for projects to improve and expand the surface transportation infrastructure in rural areas. The Farm to Market Road Improvement Act would create a 10 percent set aside in the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program specifically for farm to market road improvement projects.

The Farm to Market Road Improvement Act:

- Creates a 10 percent set aside in the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program for farm to market roads.
- Defines farm to market roads as roads within a county that has an annual gross agriculture production value of at least \$1 billion and agriculture production of at least \$500,000 per square mile.
- Requires the U.S. Department of Transportation and U.S. Department of Agriculture to create, and annually update, a list of covered counties.

Palm Beach County also SUPPORTS H.R. 3572 sponsored by Rep. David Valadao to make projects on Farm-to-Market roads eligible for funding under the Rural Surface Transportation Grant program by creating a 10% set-aside within the program for, and a definition of, Farm-to-Market roads.

PASSENGER RAIL ON FEC CORRIDOR

Continuing to MONITOR rail development progress on the FEC corridor to seek opportunities and additional dedicated funding for Tri-Rail service area expansion, mitigation of adverse noise impacts through continued investment in equipment to establish quiet zones, increased crossing safety, and minimizing traffic impacts where possible.

STATE ROAD 7 EXTENSION

State Road 7 has been on the County's Thoroughfare Plan and Long-Range Transportation Plan since 1980. It is shown on the County's Comprehensive Plan extending from Okeechobee Boulevard to Northlake Boulevard. The County partnered with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and has already constructed a portion of this roadway from Okeechobee Boulevard north to 60th Street. This roadway extension from 60th Street to Northlake Boulevard is considered a necessary connection for adequate traffic flow in the central/western area and will be an important safety/evacuation route. SUPPORT FDOT and County efforts to continue the extension of State Road 7.

AUSTRALIAN AVENUE DRAINAGE & ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Australian Avenue between Banyan Boulevard to 45th Street, within City of West Palm Beach Municipal Limits, is in dire need of infrastructure improvements. The County has undertaken design and permitting for this 4-lane median divided, 3-mile long corridor. Necessary improvements include installation of a new underground stormwater drainage system

necessitates the total reconstruction of the roadway, which allows for the addition of 4' shoulders, 6'-8' wide sidewalks, replacement of 4 bridges, installation of new conduit for new streetlights, and upgrade or installation of mast arm traffic signals at 6 intersections. The City of West Palm Beach has agreed to partner with the County on this project and intends to replace 2 lift stations, line approximately twenty thousand feet of sewer pipe and clay pipes, replace 2.8 miles of water mains, and install new service connections for many of the residential and commercial properties along the corridor. Total construction cost is estimated to be \$80 million. SUPPORT efforts to advance the Australian Avenue Drainage and Roadway Improvement Project.

PALM TRAN

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS appropriations for the following Federal Transit Administration grant programs authorized in surface transportation legislation:

- Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities Grant Funds—This grant makes federal resources available for designated recipients to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and bus-related equipment. Palm Tran received \$1,996,083 in grants for Bus and Bus Facilities in FY24.
- Section 5310 Senior and Disabled Individual Grant Funds—One-third of Palm Tran's budget is allocated to Palm Tran Connection, a division that provides transportation for seniors, the disabled and individuals that are transportation disadvantaged. Palm Tran received \$2,049,193 in FY24 grants to overhaul the paratransit fleet.
- Section 5311 Capital Grant Funds—Palm Tran received \$317,612 in Section 5311 grant funds in FY24 to assist with operating expenses.

Palm Beach County, with the help of funding available through annual transportation appropriations and authorized formula funding, is planning to undertake the following projects:

Transit Worker and Pedestrian Protection Act

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS legislation designed to protect bus operators and reduce vehicular and pedestrian accidents involving buses. The County would propose, however, removing any mandates that grant recipients cooperatively develop risk reduction plans with collective bargaining unit representatives as this might thwart the implementation of such risk reduction plans.

Bus Shelter Expansion

Palm Tran is seeking \$1,078,000 in federal funding for the revitalization and expansion of bus shelters to enhance the safety and experience of the 28,000 daily passengers who utilize public transit in Palm Beach County. Customers currently

have access to approximately 3,000 bus stops throughout the system, though many stops do not have a shelter. This funding will account for 14 new shelters that are critical in delivering quality transportation services to customers. Shelter locations will span across Palm Beach County, benefiting both urban and rural communities. The shelters will include the following amenities in addition to shade: Solar Lighting; Digital Displays; Solar USB Ports; Bike Racks; and Trash Receptacles.

EV Charging Station for Palm Tran Support Vehicles

Palm Beach County is committed to reducing greenhouse emissions by seeking \$1,000,000 for 80 level 2 and 17 level 3 EV charging stations. This electric vehicle charging station equipment will connect an electric vehicle (EV) to a source of electricity to recharge Palm Tran support vehicles and plug-in hybrids. EV charging stations are also convenient for employees to charge their EVs while at work. Workplace charging can help attract and retain a cutting-edge workforce and demonstrate leadership in adopting advanced technologies.

ENVIRONMENTAL & NATURAL RESOURCES

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The 2022 WRDA included a \$100 million authorization for wastewater infrastructure and stormwater management to improve the water quality in the St. Lucie River, Indian River Lagoon, and Lake Worth Lagoon in Martin County, St. Lucie County, and Palm Beach County, Florida. We will work with Congress and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to seek an appropriation for a project that would meet these criteria.

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS REGULATORY CHANGES

The Corps has undertaken a series of recent perpetual easement policy shifts which is delaying and crippling Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSRM) projects along the coast of Florida. As we have seen from recent hurricanes and storms, eroded beaches cannot provide protection for homes, businesses, roads, and other coastal infrastructure. Section 1145 of the WRDA 2024 provided a 2-year period in which Federal Projects were to be completed in a manner consistent with initial construction and periodic nourishments utilizing existing easements. The County SUPPORTS legislation that requires the Corps to adhere to existing easement agreements, which had previously satisfied the Corps real estate requirement, to allow these critical projects to move forward.

SUPPORT implementation of the pilot program for allowing a non-Federal interest to carry out a project under CAP through the use an alternative delivery method as authorized in WRDA 24 and extend that opportunity to Federal Shore Protection Projects. Local sponsors typically have extensive experience building environmental projects and understand the local conditions that can influence project timelines, costs and success. The Corps' Project Development Teams are often based out of regional or district offices and may not have the necessary local knowledge to design and construct projects in the most cost-effective

manner or that optimize the potential for project success. As a result, the projects could create financial liability to local sponsors who are obligated to fund all operation and maintenance after initial construction.

SUPPORT increased funding flexibility by allowing the Corps to move funding between the CAP programs and projects based on need and ability, ensuring projects that are ready to proceed and capable of executing the funds can receive those funds in a timely manner.

CORAL REEF PROTECTION AND RESTORATION

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS the “National Coral Reef Resilience Strategy 2025 to 2040” championed by NOAA’s Coral Reef Conservation Program and the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force.

OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING/EVERGLADES OIL DRILLING

The County OPPOSES oil drilling exploration in the Everglades and offshore the state of Florida and SUPPORTS the American Shores Protection Act of 2025.

EPA PROPOSED RULE ON WASTE-TO-ENERGY FACILITIES

The Palm Beach County SWA has invested more than \$1 billion in its two WTE facilities that reduce reliance on landfills and divert 50,000 tons of metals from landfills per year. The Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Proposed Rule updating the Standards of Performance for New Stationary Sources and Emissions Guidelines for Existing Sources: Large Municipal Waste Combustors (LMWC) threatens the viability of these facilities with unreasonable monitoring requirements.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS a 10-year implementation period to keep Palm Beach Renewable Energy Facilities operational until a new, state-of-the-art facility can be built by 2034.

GLADES REGION WATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

The Glades Region, which includes the Cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay, has been officially designated by the Governor as a Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO) in acknowledgment of its socio-economic challenges (Florida Statute 288.0656). Prior to 2008, the Glades Region relied exclusively on Lake Okeechobee for its water supply, which proved to be an unreliable and poor-quality source.

The County constructed a \$58 million regional water plant using a reliable brackish water source and reverse osmosis technology to improve water supply delivery in the area. Unfortunately, the water infrastructure (pipelines) in all three cities has aged and greatly increased the costs in providing high quality potable water to the population of the region. As much as 40% of the water produced by the plant is lost through leaks into the ground, which significantly reduces the volume of water available to serve customers in the Glades Region. Furthermore, the deteriorating and undersized pipes of the system have problems

providing adequate pressure during maximum daily flow conditions, particularly during fire flow events. There is considerable piping in each community that needs to be replaced to stem the leakage and improve operating pressures.

These improvements are urgently needed to address the following: 1. Preserve the high water quality of the new plant; 2. Maintain adequate fire flow pressures in the system; and 3. Protect public health and safety in the Glades Region. To assist in the restoration of the existing deteriorating infrastructure, the county SUPPORTS federal assistance to ensure the ability to deliver the highest quality water to meet established demands.

WATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADES

Palm Beach County Water Utilities Department (PBCWUD), through its interconnected water treatment plants, serves over 641,000 residents. Water Treatment Plants (WTP) 2 and 8 currently lack effective treatment systems for removing Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) chemical compounds. Compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's new national drinking water standards, effective by 2031, will require significant upgrades to meet the enforceable Maximum Contaminant Levels. Clean and safe drinking water is vital to our health, communities, and economy. As population growth increases demand, investment in reliable and resilient water infrastructure is critical.

Funding for this project will upgrade WTP 2 and 8 to enhance water quality, treatment capacity, and operational reliability. These upgrades will ensure compliance with future federal regulations, protect residents from emerging contaminants, and strengthen system resilience against climate and power-related disruptions. Funds secured for this project will: 1) construct a new water treatment plant designed using nanofiltration to reduce emerging contaminants; 2) upgrade aging plant infrastructure; 3) Build a new membrane & electrical room; and 4) install a new generator for expansion and redundancy, along with hurricane hardening, to prevent plant disruptions or failures.

Upon completion, these projects will deliver measurable improvements in water quality, operational reliability, and environmental compliance. The upgrades will safeguard clean drinking water for thousands of residents and provide a sustainable foundation for community growth and resilience over the coming decades. The county SUPPORTS federal assistance to ensure the ability to deliver the highest quality water to meet established demands and compliance.

PUBLIC SAFETY & DISASTER RELIEF

NEXT GENERATION 911

The safety and security of the nation begins with 911. Yet the 911 system remains limited by decades-old technology and is in urgent need of modernization to what is known as Next Generation 911 (NG911). NG911 would leverage modern broadband for the benefit of the public and law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical personnel, creating opportunities for cost savings and advanced features such as the ability to send photos and videos to 911.

Without significant federal funding, there is a concern that 911 networks across the country including in rural and urban areas will not be upgraded quickly and efficiently. With a significant federal grant program, Congress can ensure that our nation's leadership in broadband technology includes the world's most advanced emergency communications networks.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS funding to upgrade and maintain 911 networks.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE FUNDING

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS budget requests and funding for important criminal justice programs such as the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA), to build on current protections and increase access to justice and safety for all survivors.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS funding for the Second Chance Act grant program which aims to reduce recidivism and increase public safety and provide access to services to promote re-entry programs.

ANIMAL IMPORTATION

Palm Beach County is concerned about the large-scale importation of domestic dogs from foreign countries, which are being brought directly into our County by well-meaning animal rescue organizations. The County is concerned about limited Federal and/or State resources available to ensure that these animals are free from disease and/or to ensure proper quarantine regulations are in place and/or being followed.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS legislation to enhance the protection for Palm Beach County pets from foreign disease.

UNMANNED AIRCRAFT

The County is concerned that without a prohibition of drones over or in the proximity of critical county facilities, such as jails, law enforcement facilities, courthouses, and other government buildings, that the possibility of escapes, terrorism, and breaches in confidentiality increase significantly; all which impact public safety or potentially compromise the judicial and policy setting process.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS a continued partnership with the FAA to ensure that critical infrastructure facilities are also protected under unmanned aircraft use rules.

HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Palm Beach County supports FEMA's State and Local Programs, which includes funding for several stand-alone DHS/FEMA grant programs, including: state homeland security grants, UASI, and Port Security. The programs are administered primarily through formula allocations to the states, but also entail competitive grants to states and regions for specific policy areas, including critical infrastructure, counterterrorism, and transportation. Palm

Beach County SUPPORTS the maintenance of current funding levels, or further enhancement of grant opportunities for security funding.

FEMA FUNDING FOR PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAMS

MONITOR any legislation concerning reauthorization of the Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act particularly language that would have a significant negative impact on public lands and recreation areas. Specifically, language should be opposed that denies funding under the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Act for disaster relief to parks, recreation departments, beaches and other similar entities. Also, monitor any proposals for FEMA to offer pre-disaster mitigation pilot grants in communities throughout the nation.

Also, SUPPORT the National Parks and Recreation Association's legislative platform.

FEMA REIMBURSEMENT

FEMA has reimbursed Category B (i.e., protective measures) at 100% cost for the first 30 days of the hurricane relief efforts in declared storms. For Hurricane Michael, however, the timeframe was reduced to 5 days. Palm Beach County SUPPORTS maintaining FEMA reimbursement for Category B at 100% cost for the first 30 days of the hurricane relief efforts in declared storms.

The County continues to SUPPORT expedited funding relief efforts to industries and individuals affected by natural disasters.

FEMA COASTAL FLOOD MAPS

Palm Beach County still has concerns about modeling details that could likely result in inaccurately and meaningfully too high estimates of storm surge within the Lake Worth Lagoon. Palm Beach County plans to continue to MONITOR this issue along with the impacts of sea level rise.

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM (NFIP) REFORM

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) reauthorization occurred under the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, which was signed into law on July 6, 2012. As the NFIP struggles to stay solvent, the program is currently operating under an extension of the Authorization while Congress continues to work towards a permanent solution. Congress must reauthorize the NFIP by January 30, 2026 to avoid a lapse in authority to sell flood insurance and borrow funds.

SUPPORT a long-term solution that can bring solvency to the NFIP without unduly burdening homeowners, businesses, and taxpayers, and ensures all property owners receive affordable flood insurance.

GLADES REGION FLOOD INSURANCE MAPS

Since 2014, Palm Beach County has been coordinating with the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and FEMA regarding incorporating information related to the rehabilitation of Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD) into flood insurance rate maps (FIRMs) for the areas

surrounding Lake Okeechobee. The current flood maps do not account for improvements that have been made to HHD, correspondingly, much of the Glades region of the County is in a designated flood zone which results in increased flood insurance premiums and negatively impacts economic development.

With the completion of the HHD rehabilitation and signing of the Final Dam Safety Action Classification memorandums on June 12, 2023 the county SUPPORTS the timely completion of assessments and certifications by FEMA to prepare updated FIRMs in the Glades region. Palm Beach County will acquire improved ground surface elevation using high quality Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) and provide the resulting ground surface elevation data to FEMA to use during their update of the FIRMs for the areas surrounding Lake Okeechobee.

FUNDING FOR ENHANCED LIGHTING IN HIGH CRIME AREAS

To continue promoting safety in high crime areas, grant opportunities should be created to enhance lighting in these areas. According to a systematic review published by the Campbell Collaboration, improved street lighting is thought to affect crime in two ways: by increasing surveillance, thus deterring potential offenders, and by signifying community investment and pride in an area.

In Palm Beach County, Countywide Community Revitalization Team (CCRT) areas are residential neighborhoods generally characterized by infrastructure deficiencies (such as lack of water, unpaved roads or roads in substandard conditions, etc.); a need for neighborhood parks; a high number of code enforcement violations; and a high level of law enforcement need. These 85 designated areas may also be characterized by a concentration of very low to moderate-income populations and lower property values with an increased neighborhood crime rate.

Palm Beach County has adopted and currently applies Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to use lighting, amongst others, as a crime deterrent and enhance public safety in numerous areas of the County.

PRESIDENTIAL PROTECTION REIMBURSEMENT

With the 2024 election of Donald J. Trump, an increased level of local law enforcement activity and other security related functions will be required of the County, the Town of Palm Beach and other local governmental agencies.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS the implementation of the Presidential Residence Protection Assistance (PRPA) program, which was included in the One Big Beautiful Bill (H.R. 1) and provides \$300 million through September 2029 for reimbursing these extraordinary security measures supplied by local law enforcement and fire rescue. The County intends to apply for a PRPA grant each fiscal year contingent upon need.

Additionally, work with Congress and the Trump Administration to minimize the economic impact of, and urge federal financial reimbursement for, delays in ongoing construction

projects at PBI, and area businesses from the implementation of Temporary Flight Restrictions, and extended closures to the Lantana Airport related to those visits.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & FINANCE

OPPORTUNITY ZONE DESIGNATIONS WITH THE U.S. TREASURY

Palm Beach County collaborated with its municipalities in 2018 to recommend eligible Opportunity Zones (OZs) for federal designation. While several key tracts were approved, others in high-poverty areas such as Riviera Beach and Belle Glade were excluded. The One Big Beautiful Bill (H.R. 1, 2025) made the OZ program permanent and established a 10-year redesignation cycle. The first redesignation window opens July 1, 2026, with new zones effective January 1, 2027. Palm Beach County will use this opportunity to advocate for inclusion of its most distressed census tracts and align them with ongoing economic and housing initiatives.

Palm Beach County will strategically prioritize Opportunity Zone redesignations that align with the County's housing and affordability priorities. Housing costs have outpaced local income growth, with average monthly rents exceeding \$2,100 and median single family home sales price of \$615,000 as of 2025. The County's approach focuses on identifying census tracts where workforce and affordable housing demand is great, particularly in high-poverty areas and transit-accessible corridors. By leveraging Opportunity Zone incentives to attract mixed-use and residential investment, the County seeks to directly advance its housing affordability and economic mobility goals. The County will prepare data-driven submissions and municipal resolutions ahead of the 2026 redesignation cycle.

SUPPORT initiatives under the Opportunity Zone Transparency, Extension, and Improvement provisions of OBBB to ensure transparency, expand impact investments, and extend incentives.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program continues to fund critical local infrastructure, public facilities, and neighborhood revitalization projects. For FY2025, national CDBG appropriations totaled approximately \$3.3 billion, and Palm Beach County's entitlement grant was \$6,609,628. Palm Beach County directs its CDBG investments toward water and sewer systems, roadways, parks, drainage, and nonprofit facility improvements serving low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, and to social services for the elderly, disabled, homeless, and special needs populations. CDBG funding remains a cornerstone for equitable economic opportunity and small business support programs countywide.

SUPPORT continued and enhanced funding for the CDBG Program.

Palm Beach OPPOSES legislation which would add burdensome reporting requirements and undermine home rule and local zoning and land use authority.

INVESTMENTS SUPPORTING REDEVELOPMENT IN DISTRESSED AREAS

Palm Beach County supports expanded federal and state investment in redevelopment initiatives targeting economically distressed areas, including the Glades Region. Poverty rates in Belle Glade remain around 29%, more than twice the countywide average. The County continues to face barriers related to muck soils, infrastructure deficits, and high construction costs.

SUPPORT investments that promote economic development, affordable housing, and infrastructure improvements in distressed areas. SUPPORT funding for mitigation of muck soils and public improvements necessary to attract private sector development.

FREE TRADE

Palm Beach County's agricultural industry depends heavily on fair trade policies and biosecurity protections. Under the current administration's trade framework, the County continues to monitor agreements affecting Florida's agricultural exports and domestic competitiveness.

SUPPORT language in trade agreements that maintains pest and disease control standards and closes loopholes harmful to local growers.

FARMWORKER AND MIGRANT HOUSING

The farmworker housing stock within the United States is aging and in many circumstances is considered substandard for those who live there. Florida has a large number of this affected housing, which requires increased federal funding to complete repairs and renovations.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS efforts to make Programmatic budget requests that would increase funding in the USDA Farm Labor Housing Loan and Grant Program to \$15 million and to increase funding for migrant and seasonal housing through the Department of Labor's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act-National Farmworker Jobs Program to \$15 million.

ROAD TO HOUSING ACT

The Renewing Opportunity in the American Dream (ROAD) to Housing Act of 2025 is a bipartisan federal housing proposal aimed at increasing housing supply, improving affordability, and modernizing federal housing programs. The bill was included in the Senate-passed National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) in October, 2025. In the House of Representatives, leadership has indicated a willingness to support elements of the bill, though they also have their own goals and approaches regarding housing reform that do not identically match those of the Senate.

Apart from the permanent expansion of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, the ROAD to Housing Act would be one of the most consequential federal housing reform efforts in years. It combines measures to reduce regulatory

barriers, incentivize housing development near transit, streamline permitting, and expand financing for affordable and workforce housing. The bill would also increase local governments' access to federal resources through new grant and incentive programs tied to housing outcomes.

Housing Supply, Zoning & Land-use Reform

- The bill directs the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to publish best-practice frameworks for state and local zoning and land-use policies (under the "Housing Supply Frameworks Act" portion).
- It creates an Innovation Fund (approximately \$200 million annually) for local governments/tribes that demonstrate measurable increases in housing supply, including reforms such as streamlined permitting, density bonuses, zoning changes.
- It provides grants for local governments/tribes to adopt pre-approved housing designs (e.g., accessory dwelling units (ADUs), duplexes, townhouses) and accelerate affordable housing construction, with a set portion reserved for rural areas.
- It incentivizes localities to adopt housing-friendly policies near major transit projects: the "Build More Housing Near Transit Act" portion of the bill links federal Capital Investment Grants transit funding (typically for relatively significant transit projects) applications to pro-housing zoning and reduced parking minimums.
- It streamlines federal environmental review (via NEPA) for certain housing/infill projects by expanding categorical exclusions and delegating review authority to states/local governments.

Financing and Investment in Affordable Housing

- The bill raises the cap on bank Public Welfare Investments (PWI) from 15 percent to 20 percent —unlocking additional capital for affordable housing and community development projects.
- It lifts the cap on the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program and makes certain reforms to strengthen affordability preservation in communities.
- It includes a "Whole-Home Repairs" pilot to support grants/forgivable loans to eligible homeowners or landlords for repairs/modifications of aging housing stock.

Bonus Mechanisms and "Accountability" for Localities

- Importantly, the bill proposes linking certain federal grant funds (such as Community Development Block Grants – CDBG) to housing production outcomes; e.g., localities that accelerate home-building may receive bonuses; those lagging may face reduced funding.

Program Oversight & Coordination

- The bill reforms housing counselling and financial literacy programs (including HUD's ability to evaluate performance, revoke certifications) — recognizing local governments often partner with or fund such agencies.

- It includes provisions to coordinate housing programs across HUD, USDA (for rural housing), and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (for veterans' housing) to reduce duplication and improve program delivery.

Rural & Manufactured Housing

- The bill includes reforms targeted at rural multifamily housing (USDA programs) and manufactured housing, acknowledging unique challenges in non-urban localities.

Bill Authorizations and Other Changes

- The bill proposes to reauthorize several prominent federal programs and at times, suggests changes, including to the HOME program, aiming to improve program administration and facilitate the construction of more affordable housing.
- The bill would authorize the CDBG-Disaster Recovery program for the first time, seeking to expedite the delivery of federal funding to disaster impacted communities.
- Allows states and localities that receive Emergency Solutions Grant funding to request a waiver of the statutory 60 percent spending cap on emergency shelter beds and street outreach.

NEIGHBORHOOD HOMES INVESTMENT ACT

The Neighborhood Homes Investment Act (NHIA) was again introduced in the 119th Congress by Senator Todd Young (R-IN) and Representative Mike Kelly (R-PA) as S. 1686 and H.R. 2854. The NHIA would create a new federal tax credit to generate investments in housing in eligible census tracts. This bill allows a business-related tax credit for certain development costs for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or remediation of qualified real property (i.e., real property affixed on a permanent foundation and comprised of four or fewer residential units, a condominium unit, or a house or apartment owned by a cooperative housing corporation).

The bill also provides for the exclusion from gross income, for income tax purposes, of the value of any subsidy provided to a taxpayer by any state energy office for purposes of improvements made to a qualified residence.

The NHIA has the potential to generate 500,000 homes over 10 years, \$125,000,000,000 of total development activity, over 800,000 jobs in construction and construction-related industries, and over \$35,000,000,000 in federal, state, and local tax revenues.

Palm Beach County supports NHIA and other federal programs that will increase and sustain housing for homeownership and recommends that local governments be eligible to apply.

INCOME LIMITS

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses Area Median Income as the basis for establishing housing program income limits and maximum affordable housing rents. HUD bases Area Median Income on median family income data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Median family income characterizes only the income of family-type households, while median household income captures the income of all households. Median family

income is higher than median family income because family households typically earn more than non-family households. For example, HUD's 2025 Area Median Income for Palm Beach County is \$111,800, compared to a 2025 median household income of \$81,115. Consequently, the current use of median family income results in higher program income limits and higher affordable rents than would result from the use of median household income.

HUD should review its method of establishing Area Median Income and consider revising the methodology to use median household income so that the resulting income limits better reflect the entire population, and the affordable rents better serve those targeted for assistance through HUD programs. Using median household income would provide a more accurate basis for program eligibility and affordability benchmarks.

SUPPORT HUD's review of income limit and housing rent methodologies to better reflect affordability for the entire population.

RURAL DEFINITION/USDA HOUSING

The City of Belle Glade is located in a rural region of western Palm Beach County, which is in dire need of housing and is distinctly different than the urbanized eastern portion of the County. Due to the USDA definition of "rural," the City of Belle Glade does not qualify for USDA single family housing programs. One factor considered for eligibility within the Rural Definition is the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) that communities are designated within. According to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, these classifications are utilized for collecting statistics in geographical areas and not for the purpose of dispensing federal funds.

SUPPORT redefining "rural" classifications to ensure equitable access to federal housing programs.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

FAIR HOUSING FUNDING INCREASE

The Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) funding is the only federal resource for local private enforcement and fair housing services, enabling recipients to carry out activities designed to inform the public about rights and obligations under federal, state, or local laws prohibiting housing discrimination, and to enforce those rights. Palm Beach County SUPPORTS increased funding to \$56 million for FY26 to increase grant awards for multi-year enforcement grants, strengthen education and outreach grants, and begin creating private fair housing groups in areas not served by a full-service fair housing group.

The Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) also plays an important role in handling fair housing cases filed under state and local laws. An increase would better compensate local and state government civil rights agencies for their processing and investigation of cases they receive from government entities, the public, or those that are referred to them by HUD. Palm Beach County SUPPORTS increasing funding to \$26 million for FHAP.

The Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) has seen consistent understaffing which has created long delays in the investigation of complaints. These delays have caused great harm to HUD's implementation of the Fair Housing Act and Congress must support greater staffing numbers at HUD FHEO. Palm Beach County SUPPORTS increasing funding to \$86 million to support 1,125 Full-Time-Equivalent staff at HUD FHEO.

TITLE IV-E FUNDS

Every state's largest source of funding for child welfare services comes from federal Title IV-E funds. In nearly every state, these funds can only be expended after the government removes a child from a home due to unsafe conditions. In 2005, Florida recommended another solution to the federal government: Allow flexibility in the use of Title IV-E funds so necessary services could be provided to children and families before safety is threatened, and before children endure the trauma of being removed from their families. Florida's Title IV-E Waiver expired in September 2019.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS the reauthorization of Florida's Title IV-E Waiver.

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

The goal of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals to become fully self-sufficient. The CSBG is designed to help low-income individuals and families: secure and retain meaningful employment; attain an adequate education; improve the use of available income, obtain adequate housing, obtain emergency assistance, including health and nutrition services; remove obstacles which block the achievement of self-sufficiency; and achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS legislation which would reauthorize the program through FY 2034.

SOBER HOMES

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is charged with the interpretation of the Fair Housing Amendments Act. There have been changes made by HUD regarding the language within the Fair Housing Amendments Act ("the Act") and its application to sober homes. The courts have applied the Act inconsistently over the years and this has caused a great burden to be placed upon the states and local governments, some of which are currently facing over-concentration of sober homes in their single-family residential communities, as well as rampant abuse of vulnerable residents with substance use disorder who have been exploited by unscrupulous sober homeowners and managers.

While the County has made strides with supported changes to federal rules, changes to state law, and funding of a local Sober Homes Task Force, there is still work to be done.

The County SUPPORTS continued clarifications to the Fair Housing Amendments Act and changes to state laws to prevent abuse and exploitation of patients in sober homes by

operators in an effort to protect the health, safety and welfare of both the residents of the sober homes and the surrounding areas where the homes are located.

OPIOID USE/SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that more than 140 Americans die every day from drug overdoses—including, on average, 91 specifically from opioids.

The Cures Act passed in both the House of Representatives and Senate with strong support and was signed into law in December of 2016. The Cures Act provides multiyear funding to reduce opioid/substance use, mental research and drug development. The funding will total \$4.8 billion over ten years; however, the funding must be appropriated every year.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS continued full funding of the 21st Century Cures Act, requests flexibility to use these dollars in support of innovative initiatives, including syringe exchange programs, and will continue to monitor the activities of the federal Opioid Task Force.

Because Palm Beach County is integrating the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration's (SAMHSA) long-standing guidance related to establishing Recovery Oriented Systems of Care into its substance use disorder and behavioral health services planning, the County needs additional funding to further expand its recovery services and supports.

SAMHSA has two grant programs, Recovery Community Services Program (RCSP) and Building Communities of Recovery (BCOR) to support this integration. Palm Beach County SUPPORTS increased funding for both RCSP and BCOR grant programs to allow community recovery organizations, services and supports to further grow in the County and nationally.

HIV/AIDS FUNDING

Prior to 2013, Ryan White Program formulaic funding was based on the number of cumulative cases in the County. Since then, funding is based on the number of cases physically living in the County. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is responsible for funding levels based on the new criteria, but there is a 2–3-year lag on payments making their way to Palm Beach County. The County SUPPORTS efforts to increase the formula funding and ensure that the county receives a more timely and accurate payment from the CDC.

SUPPORT continuation and funding of the Health Resources and Services Administration's Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S., which aims to reduce the number of new infections in the United States by at least 90% by 2030.

OPPOSE efforts to divert funding from HIV Care & Treatment programs to HIV Prevention Programs.

SUPPORT legislation that requires applying additional payments, discounts, and other financial assistance towards the cost-sharing requirements of health insurance plans, and other co-pay accumulator efforts.

SUPPORT funding for Dept. of Housing and Urban Development's Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program (HOPWA). HOPWA is the only Federal program dedicated to addressing the housing needs of low-income people living with HIV/AIDS and their families. Grantees partner with nonprofit organizations and housing agencies to provide housing and support to these beneficiaries.

SUPPORT removal of local Maintenance of Effort requirements for Ryan White Program funding, and SUPPORT timely funding allocations based on where the patient is currently living, not based on where a person was diagnosed.

FAMILY CAREGIVING

The RAISE (Recognize, Assist, Include, Support and Engage) Family Caregivers Act, which became law on January 22, 2018, directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a national family caregiving strategy. This strategy is intended to identify actions that communities, providers, governments, and others may take to recognize and support family caregivers.

Because there are at least 1.3 million caregiving youth in the United States ages 8-18 years old, Palm Beach County SUPPORTS continued resources for caregiving youth.

FINANCIAL CLIFF

Current data show that 12.7% of Floridians and 11.1% of Palm Beach County families live in poverty. These numbers not only affect individual families, but also businesses and Florida's economy. Many social services designed to help low-income working individuals and families have "financial cliffs," where small increases in incomes will disqualify families from receiving any level of financial assistance.

A soft cliff results when benefits slowly phase out as income increases, which are a more favorable benefit structure, as the family is not significantly penalized when their income increases. Hard cliffs occur when a marginal increase in income results in a significant or complete loss in benefits, meaning that a small increase in income can result in thousands of dollars in lost resources. The hard cliff benefit structure is detrimental to family resources, yet hard cliffs are the types most often faced by Florida families in poverty.

The County SUPPORTS revising eligibility policies to eliminate or greatly reduce the "financial cliff" effect for social services that support children and families trying to work their way out of poverty and would incentivize efforts to increase wages and create a pathway to economic self-sufficiency.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FUNDING

The County SUPPORTS the continued appropriation of funds for mental health services. It is estimated that untreated and mistreated mental illness costs American business, government and taxpayers \$113 billion annually. The County SUPPORTS efforts to develop evidence-based community care that is accessible to all, as well as treatment models that provide for a coordinated continuum of care for patients. Funding efforts should not be solely focused on treating those with the most disabling forms of mental illness, but rather a range of prevention, wellness, and crisis treatment, as well as educational outreach to reduce the stigmatism surrounding mental health. This also would include supporting legislation that seeks detection of stress and suicide prevention in rural farming areas of the country. Additionally, the county SUPPORTS protecting the expansion of mental health benefits and insurance parity protections under the Affordable Care Act.

VETERANS' HOMELESSNESS

According to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, over 40,000 veterans are homeless on any given night. In Palm Beach County, there has been a 73% increase in homeless veterans over previous years.

Bills introduced in the 119th Congress include HR 1960, the Simplifying Veterans Assistance Act sponsored by Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-PA) requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide publicly available guidance and best practices for entities seeking grants to offer comprehensive service programs for homeless veterans, and to hold at least two online information sessions between the funding announcement and the application deadline. Sen. Mike Rounds (R-SD) sponsored S. 2234, The Reducing Homelessness Through Program Reform Act which requires the Department of Housing and Urban Development to streamline and modernize the Emergency Solutions Grants and Continuum of Care programs by expanding administrative funding, allowing multi-year grants, improving inspection and documentation processes, enhancing data coordination with health and justice systems, upgrading technology, establishing an advisory committee of people with lived experience, and promoting partnerships between housing and healthcare providers to better prevent and reduce homelessness.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS efforts and programs put forth by the federal government to assist in ending homelessness for our veterans. Palm Beach County also SUPPORTS exploration of the use of undeveloped property at the Thomas H. Corey VAMC as housing for homeless veterans.

VETERANS/PENSION POACHER

Individuals known as “pension poachers” are those who charge to ostensibly assist seniors with applying for benefits, but often are trying to do little more than prey on America’s elderly and disabled veterans. It is illegal for anyone who is not an approved agent or attorney to charge veterans a fee for assisting them in filing a claim or appeal with the VA; however, there is currently no penalty for violations. Due to this, veterans are being defrauded, often up to thousands of dollars, by financial predators who charge fees and provide little to no help.

SUPPORT legislation that would make it easier to identify and penalize individuals participating in these types of scams that have compromised a veteran's ability to receive their pension benefits.

WOMEN INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC) PROGRAM

WIC is a federally funded nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children. WIC provides the following at no-cost healthy foods, nutrition education and counseling, breastfeeding support, and referrals for health care and community services. The WIC program is designed to serve certain categories of women, infants and children, specifically: Pregnant Women (during pregnancy and up to 6 weeks after the birth of an infant or the end of the pregnancy); Postpartum Women (up to six months after the birth of the infant or the end of the pregnancy); Breastfeeding Women (up to the infant's first birthday); Infants (up to the infant's first birthday); and Children (up to the child's fifth birthday).

Congress, on a bipartisan basis, has fully funded WIC for more than 25 years. As lawmakers work to finalize full-year funding bills, it is critical that they honor that long-standing commitment and give WIC the funding it needs to serve every low-income family who seeks assistance and to provide participants with the full science-based benefit.

The county SUPPORTS adequate funding for the WIC program to serve all eligible mothers and babies.

FARM BILL REAUTHORIZATION

Set to expire on September 30, 2026, the Farm Bill is an omnibus, multiyear law that governs an array of agricultural and food programs impacting counties, including SNAP, as well as grant funding and loan financing for water/wastewater infrastructure, community facilities, broadband, electric, telephone, housing, renewable energy and business development in rural communities. The Farm Bill was extended by the 119th Congress and President Trump in November which allows authorized programs to continue through September 30, 2026.

SUPPORT Farm Bill Reauthorization with focus on strengthening federal nutrition programs, family farms and young farmer support, land and water conservation, and rural economic development and housing.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM/THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy families so they can purchase healthy food and move towards self-sufficiency. SNAP was reauthorized along with other food and agriculture programs in the 2018 Farm Bill, which is set to expire, after extension, on September 30, 2026. Though SNAP is an entitlement, it still receives funding annually through the congressional appropriations process, meaning benefit availability can be impacted by government shutdowns.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a federal program that helps supplement the diets of people with low income by providing them with emergency food assistance at no cost. USDA provides 100% American-grown USDA Foods and administrative funds to states to operate TEFAP.

SUPPORT appropriate funding for SNAP and TEFAP, allowing participants to access the most appropriate food choices for each participating family.

EDUCATION AND BROADBAND

FUNDING FOR THE INSTITUTE FOR MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES (IMLS) AND THE LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY ACT

Most federal library funds are distributed through IMLS to each state through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). LSTA funds technology purchases and related activities. In 2020, \$68,387 was awarded to Palm Beach County through the Florida Department of State to fund Digital Media Labs at 13 of our branch locations. In 2021 Palm Beach County received two grant awards. \$103,864 was received to deploy digital display signage at all locations. Additionally, \$64,913 was awarded to upgrade the assistive listening devices in all library meeting rooms.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS full funding for The Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) at up to \$232 million dollars, the maximum authorization based on the last reauthorization. This would be an increase of \$52 million over FY 25 when it was funded at \$180 million.

E-RATE AND UNIVERSAL SERVICES FUNDING

E-rate, also known as the Universal Services Schools and Libraries program, is the program that provides discounts to public libraries and schools on telecommunications services, internet access, Wi-Fi equipment, and closely related costs. The E-Rate program has a positive impact in increasing broadband capacity and Wi-Fi access.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS full funding for the E-Rate and Universal Services programs which support telecommunications and internet access.

NETWORK NEUTRALITY

Network neutrality is the principle that internet service providers should treat all data equally and should not discriminate or provide preference to any data. Without strong net neutrality protections, internet service providers may block, throttle, or prioritize certain legal internet traffic. A non-neutral net gives entities who can afford to pay more, control over what information every American can access, potentially relegating libraries and other non-commercial enterprises to the internet's "slow lanes."

In January 2025, a federal appeals court struck down the FCC's net neutrality rules in total. It will now take an act of Congress to restore net neutrality provisions.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS Network Neutrality to ensure all our residents' equality for their internet traffic.

BROADBAND ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY

The Affordable Connectivity Program is an FCC benefit program that helps ensure that households can afford the broadband they need for work, school, healthcare and more. The benefit provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward internet service for eligible households. Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers if they contribute more than \$10 and less than \$50 toward the purchase price.

Palm Beach County will MONITOR the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program (BEAD), the Affordable Connectivity Program and explore other opportunities to ensure reliable, affordable broadband access to all.

Too many communities lack access to high-speed Internet. Many more can't afford it or don't know how to use it. The divide between those who have Internet access and those who don't is stark. To create an equitable economy, we all need access to reliable and affordable high-speed Internet.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS The Digital Equity Act, which provides \$2.75 billion to establish three grant programs that promote digital equity and inclusion. They aim to ensure that all people and communities have the skills, technology, and capacity needed to reap the full benefits of our digital economy.

CYBER SECURITY

Cyberspace and its underlying infrastructure are vulnerable to a wide range of risks stemming from both physical and cyber threats and hazards.

A range of traditional crimes are now being perpetrated through cyberspace. This includes child exploitation conspiracies, banking and financial fraud, intellectual property violations, elections data breaches and other crimes, all of which have substantial human and economic consequences.

Palm Beach County SUPPORTS legislation to strengthen the security and resiliency of cyberspace.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

To reflect Palm Beach County's commitment to a responsible and inclusive approach towards AI integration, prioritizing not only technological advancement but also the well-being and support of all members of our workforce, the county SUPPORTS the following:

Local AI Development and Integration Advocacy:

Seek federal support for the development of Generative AI technologies in Palm Beach County, including funding for startups, research and development tax incentives, and collaboration grants between businesses and academic institutions.

Establishment of Ethical AI Guidelines:

Propose federal guidelines for ethical AI use, focusing on data privacy, misuse prevention, and transparency. Local oversight committees should be established to monitor AI development and usage.

Focus on Education, Workforce Development, and Support for Displaced Workers:

- Federal investment in local AI education and workforce upskilling programs.
- Initiatives for workers to acquire AI-related skills.
- Partnerships between AI companies and educational institutions for practical training.
- Career transition support services for workers displaced by AI, including job placement assistance and financial support during retraining.
- Development of programs specifically aimed at supporting individuals who cannot upskill, including alternative employment opportunities and social safety nets.

Enhancing Infrastructure for AI Development:

Requesting federal assistance to upgrade the technological infrastructure of Palm Beach County, vital for AI development and implementation.

Increasing Public Awareness and Engagement with AI:

Advocating for federal support in raising public awareness about AI, ensuring the community is informed about its impacts.

Promoting Cross-Sector AI Collaboration:

Encouraging the federal promotion of AI across various industries in Palm Beach County to maximize community benefits.

Monitoring AI Impact and Policy Adjustment:

Recommending federal mechanisms for continuous evaluation of AI's impact on the local economy and workforce for timely policy modifications.

FY 2027 POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Palm Beach County will seek federal funding opportunities, including appropriations, Community Project Funding and grants for all Federal Agenda items, including:

Water Treatment Plant Upgrades	\$3,000,000
CR 880/Farm-to-Market Roads	\$2,000,000
Australian Ave Roadway and Drainage Improvements	\$2,000,000
Palm Beach International Airport Security Improvements	\$2,000,000
Lake Worth Lagoon	\$500,000
Restore Reentry	\$500,000

FY 2026 EARMARKS AWAITING FINAL APPROVAL

Rep. Mast	Peanut Island	\$1,500,000
	N. County Airport	\$2,000,000
Rep. Frankel	PB Lakes Blvd. Bridge	\$1,000,000
Rep. Moskowitz	B.A. S. County Park Improve.	\$850,000

Palm Beach County Congressional Districts

