



PASCO EDC
NORTH TAMPA BAY, FLORIDA.

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

TASK FORCE REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2026

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Acknowledgments

The Pasco Economic Development Council extends its sincere appreciation to the members of the Business Retention & Expansion Task Force for their time, expertise, and commitment to supporting Pasco County's business community.

Through a series of collaborative discussions, site visits, and strategic planning sessions, Task Force members provided valuable insight into the challenges and opportunities facing local businesses. Their contributions helped shape the recommendations contained in this report and will continue to influence the evolution of Pasco EDC's Business Retention & Expansion efforts.

The recommendations presented herein reflect the collective knowledge and experience of business leaders, investors, workforce professionals, educators, nonprofit organizations, and community partners dedicated to strengthening Pasco County's economy.

- **Chair, Michele Leo-Hintson, Shumaker**
- Dewey Mitchell, Berkshire Hathaway Florida Properties
- Maria Ehrlich, Catamount
- Peter Mittica, Regions Bank
- Ricky Gude, Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative
- Leah Pearson, Bank of Central Florida
- Lindsey Hack, Spherion Staffing
- Ed Rogers, P.E., Florida Design Consultants
- Michelle Keyser, TouchPoint Medical
- Frank Rygiel, Construction Services, Inc. of Tampa
- Paul Manuel, P.E., Coastal Design Consultants
- Mark Smith, Carr, Riggs & Ingram
- Jamie Minotti, Greater Pasco Chamber of Commerce
- Chuck Tiernan, Community Foundation of Tampa Bay

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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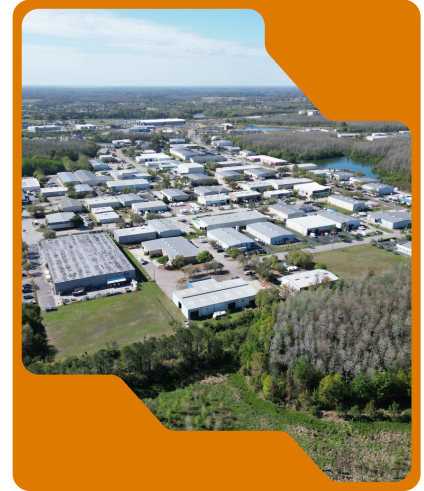
PascoEDC.com

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION TASK FORCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Pasco Economic Development Council (Pasco EDC) Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) Task Force was established to evaluate opportunities to strengthen support for existing businesses in Pasco County and identify strategies that improve long-term business growth, retention, and competitiveness.

Over the course of six meetings, task force members reviewed BR&E best practices, participated in a mock BR&E visit, evaluated existing employer engagement processes, prioritized key business challenges, and developed recommendations intended to strengthen Pasco EDC's BR&E program.



The Task Force found that many of the challenges facing local businesses are not the result of a lack of resources, but rather a lack of visibility, coordination, and awareness of those resources. Members also emphasized the importance of maintaining strong relationships with employers and creating mechanisms that allow business leaders to remain engaged in the BR&E process beyond individual visits or events.

Based on these findings, the Task Force recommends:

1. Establishing a BR&E Advisory Committee
2. Improving Visibility & Access to Business Resources
3. Developing a BR&E Education & Engagement Series

Together, these recommendations create a sustainable framework for connecting businesses with resources, strengthening relationships, and supporting continued economic growth in Pasco County.

TASK FORCE BACKGROUND

Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) programs focus on helping existing businesses succeed and grow within a community.

While business recruitment remains an important economic development strategy, research consistently shows that the majority of new job creation comes from companies that are already operating within a community. Effective BR&E programs help identify challenges before they become barriers to growth and ensure businesses are connected to the resources they need to expand and remain competitive.

The Pasco EDC BR&E program currently utilizes employer outreach, business visits, surveys, partner referrals, and resource coordination to support local businesses. Recognizing the importance of continuously improving these efforts, the Pasco EDC Board of Directors authorized the formation of a BR&E Task Force to evaluate the current program and recommend enhancements.

TASK FORCE PROCESS

1. October 2025: Introduction to BR&E best practices, program goals, and task force objectives.
2. November 2025: On-site meeting and mock BR&E visit at TouchPoint Medical to better understand employer engagement and information gathering processes.



3. January 2026: Review and prioritization of key BR&E focus areas.
4. February 2026: Development of recommendation concepts and identification of strategic priorities.
5. April 2026: Review and refinement of draft recommendations.
6. June 2026: Final review and adoption of recommendations.
7. Throughout this process, members contributed expertise representing manufacturing, healthcare, workforce development, higher education, legal services, finance, nonprofit organizations, utilities, and local government.

KEY FINDINGS

The Task Force identified several recurring themes throughout its discussions.

Businesses Need Easier Access to Information

Many resources currently exist to support local businesses, but employers often struggle to identify the appropriate resource, organization, or program when challenges arise.

Businesses frequently encounter a fragmented landscape of service providers, workforce organizations, financing partners, government agencies, and technical assistance programs.

Awareness Is Often a Greater Challenge Than Availability

Task force members repeatedly noted that businesses are frequently unaware of resources that already exist.

This challenge extends across workforce programs, financing opportunities, export assistance, business support services, and government resources.

Increasing awareness and accessibility may have a greater impact than creating entirely new programs.

Relationships Remain Critical

Business retention efforts are most successful when built on trusted relationships. Employers are often more likely to engage when connected through existing business leaders, investors, industry partners, or peer networks.

Strong relationships improve communication, trust, and issue identification.

Coordination Creates Value

The Task Force identified opportunities to improve coordination among workforce partners, educational institutions, local governments, utilities, business organizations, and economic development partners.

Better coordination can improve outcomes without requiring significant new investments.

GOALS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: ESTABLISH A BR&E ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Goal

Create a standing advisory body that provides ongoing guidance, support, and accountability for the BRE program while expanding Pasco EDC's capacity to engage existing businesses through a coordinated BRE visitation program.

Recommendation

Establish a Business Retention & Expansion Advisory Committee composed of investors, business leaders, workforce partners, educational institutions, and strategic stakeholders.

The committee should serve as a long-term partner to Pasco EDC by providing industry insight, supporting employer engagement, facilitating introductions, and helping coordinate resources.

As a core component of its work, the BRE Advisory Committee should support an ongoing business visitation program that engages committee members and other community stakeholders in Pasco EDC-led visits with existing businesses. The program should leverage members' relationships and expertise to expand Pasco EDC's reach, strengthen connections with local employers, and identify opportunities where Pasco EDC and its partners can provide assistance.

The committee should also serve as the steward of this report and help guide implementation of the recommendations contained herein.

Potential Responsibilities

- Review BR&E trends and emerging business issues
- Support employer engagement efforts
- Facilitate introductions to business leaders
- Participate in the BRE visitation program alongside Pasco EDC staff
- Identify opportunities for resource coordination
- Assist with educational programming
- Provide feedback on BR&E initiatives and performance
- Monitor implementation progress of Task Force recommendations

Organizational Considerations

Pasco EDC should evaluate opportunities to consolidate existing advisory structures where appropriate to improve efficiency and coordination. The BR&E Advisory Committee should be formed consistent with Pasco EDC governance and Board processes.

Expected Outcomes

- Improved business intelligence
- Stronger stakeholder engagement
- Increased collaboration among partner organizations
- Greater continuity within the BR&E program

GOALS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 2: IMPROVE VISIBILITY & ACCESS TO BUSINESS RESOURCES

Goal

Make it easier for businesses to identify, access, and utilize available resources.

Recommendation

The Resource Network should build upon Pasco EDC's existing online Resource Hub by organizing business resources into intuitive categories, strengthening referral pathways, and making it easier for businesses to identify and access the appropriate programs and partner organizations. The Resource Hub should serve as the primary entry point for businesses seeking assistance while providing the option to request personalized support from Pasco EDC staff when needed.

Suggested Resource Categories

- Workforce & Talent
- Capital & Financing
- Business Expansion & Site Development
- Permitting & Regulatory Assistance
- International Trade & Export Assistance
- Entrepreneurship & Small Business Support (SMARTstart Integrations)
- Government & Community Resources

Supporting Strategies

- Develop a standardized referral process
- Improve coordination among partner organizations
- Establish resource ownership and maintenance procedures
- Integrate resource navigation into BR&E visits and follow-up activities
- Integrate online business assistance requests into Pasco EDC's existing BR&E case management process to improve referral tracking and follow-up.

Expected Outcomes

- Improved awareness of available resources
- Increased utilization of partner programs
- Faster connections to assistance
- Reduced frustration among businesses seeking support

GOALS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 3: DEVELOP A BR&E EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT SERIES

Goal

Increase awareness of resources and strengthen relationships with the local business community.

Recommendation

Create a recurring BR&E Education & Engagement Series under a unified BR&E brand that provides businesses with practical information, expert insight, and direct access to resource partners.

The series should complement BR&E visits by proactively educating businesses before challenges arise.

Potential Topics

- Workforce Development Resources
- Capital & Financing Options
- Business Growth Strategies
- Export Assistance
- Succession Planning
- Expansion & Development Processes
- Economic Development Programs
- Industry Trends

Leveraging Community Expertise

The Task Force recommends utilizing the expertise of investors, advisory committee members, and strategic partners as presenters, panelists, and content contributors. Whenever practical, Pasco EDC should collaborate with partner organizations to co-host educational programming, build upon existing events, and expand the reach of business resources throughout the community. This approach will strengthen engagement while showcasing local expertise.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased awareness of available resources
- Stronger business relationships
- Increased participation in economic development programs
- Earlier identification of business needs

MEASURING SUCCESS

The Task Force recommends that implementation progress be reviewed periodically by the BR&E Advisory Committee using these measures to identify trends, evaluate outcomes, and guide continuous improvement of the BR&E program.

Key measures should be tracked through existing Pasco EDC reporting systems and integrated into monthly Board of Directors dashboards and quarterly Pasco Board of County Commissioners reporting.

Key Measures

- Employer Engagement
- Existing business visits
- Business challenges identified
- Resolution rate
- Active retention and expansion projects

Resource Network

- Resource Hub overall utilization
- Resource utilization by category
- Referrals made

Education & Engagement

- Events conducted
- Businesses participating

BR&E Advisory Committee

- Committee participation
- Referrals generated
- Recommendations advanced

Conclusion

The Business Retention & Expansion Task Force found that Pasco County possesses a strong network of organizations, programs, and partners capable of supporting business growth.

The challenge is not simply the availability of resources, but ensuring businesses can find them, understand them, and connect to them at the right time.

The recommendations contained in this report are designed to create a more coordinated, visible, and relationship-driven BR&E ecosystem.

By establishing a BR&E Advisory Committee, improving visibility and access to business resources, and creating a BR&E Education & Engagement Series, Pasco EDC can strengthen its ability to support existing employers and continue fostering economic growth throughout Pasco County.

Respectfully submitted,

Business Retention & Expansion Task Force
August 2026