



MEDIA HANDBOOK



*A directory and
guide to working
with the media*

Dealing with the media as a **PIO (Public Information Officer)** can be challenging but crucial in effectively conveying information.

Here are ten tips to navigate interactions with the media:

1. **Establish Clear Communication Channels:** Set up a designated point of contact for media inquiries to streamline communication.
2. **Be Proactive:** Anticipate potential media interest and prepare key messages and statements in advance.
3. **Honesty and Transparency:** Always be truthful and transparent in your interactions with the media to maintain credibility.
4. **Stay Calm Under Pressure:** Remain composed and poised during media interactions, especially in high-pressure situations.
5. **Know Your Audience:** Tailor your messaging to suit the audience and the platform through which information is conveyed.
6. **Build Relationships:** Cultivate positive relationships with journalists and reporters to foster mutual respect and effective communication.
7. **Media Training:** Provide media training for spokespersons to handle interviews confidently and effectively.
8. **Respond Promptly:** Address media inquiries promptly to ensure timely and accurate information dissemination.
9. **Stay Informed:** Stay abreast of current events and media trends to understand better how to engage with the media effectively.
10. **Monitor Coverage:** Monitor media coverage of your organization or agency to gauge public perception and promptly address any misconceptions or inaccuracies.

IN THREE, TWO, ONE...

The world of communications keeps expanding at a seemingly exponential rate. Whenever something important happens, in a matter of seconds, live streaming video, social media posting/sharing and text alerts appear on TV and radio news channels, social media, cell phones and websites.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Just as the U.S. Constitution serves as the basis for our individual rights as citizens, the First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech, religion, peaceable assembly, the right to petition the government, and freedom of the press.

All governments in Florida operate under the Government in the Sunshine Law and public records laws, which were enacted to make government in Florida open and accessible to the public. This includes providing members of the news media access to information and making government documents and data available for public review.

SO, WHAT IS NEWS?

Whatever people are talking about is news. Determining whether a particular item may be newsworthy, apply the **NIDI** test. Is this piece of information **N**ew, **I**mportant, **D**ifferent or **I**nteresting? Any of these qualifiers may be enough to warrant a news story.

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNMENT IN MEDIA RELATIONS

The news media help us inform residents about county government programs and services, plans, and achievements, as well as our stewardship of public funds. One of the main responsibilities of Public Affairs is helping reporters gather information, locate documents, and get in contact with those who are in the best position to answer their questions.

As county government employees, we operate under the provisions of Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law, the Public Records Act, and the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics. We are accountable to the citizens we serve and, by extension, also to the news media under the Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA).

The purpose of media relations is to ensure accuracy of information; assure that no preferential treatment is given; avoid dissemination of conflicting information; and minimize the spread of rumors.

WHY COOPERATE WITH THE NEWS MEDIA?

It is in our best interest to answer reporters' questions promptly and provide the information they request. Refusing to respond or saying "no comment" can result in a one-sided story and/or give the impression that we have something to hide. For the county's position to be fairly represented, it is important to cooperate when reporters call seeking comment.

WHO CAN SPEAK TO THE MEDIA?

According to [PPM CW-0-011](#) on press releases and media contact, "any employee may respond to press inquiries, if the queries concern information of a general nature involving well-known, documented facts." For example, a reporter may only be calling to get a phone number or to confirm the date and time of an upcoming event.

If there are questions that require interpretive answers or opinions, it's probably best to defer to subject matter experts, department directors, the county administrator, or to a commissioner if the issue pertains to a specific district. For more information, please contact Public Affairs at (561) 355-2754.

NEWS ETIQUETTE

Inquiries from the media should always be returned promptly.

There may be times when a manager needs to be pulled out of a routine meeting to answer a media inquiry. If the reporter is not available when you call back, ask to speak to the editor or producer.

Be fair with all reporters, not just those who cover Board of County Commissioners meetings or who write stories about your particular department or project.

Do not share with a reporter something you have discussed with another reporter or news agency. If a reporter happens to ask, it is okay to confirm that you have spoken with another reporter about a particular issue (if, in fact, you have), but under no circumstances should you volunteer this fact or disclose any details of that discussion.

Do not ask to review or approve a story before it is published or aired. You can ask when a story will run, but the reporter may not know. That decision is usually up to editors and producers.

GENERATING POSITIVE PRESS COVERAGE

Reporters are looking for stories that affect large numbers of people, involve new policies and programs, represent a cost savings to taxpayers, and/or deal with proposals being considered by the Board of County Commissioners. Sometimes new information or a different angle will trigger a news piece, even if the issue itself has already been reported.

Some stories lend themselves better to social, web and print media than TV and radio and vice versa. A print reporter, for example, might not need a photo for a story that contains a lot of facts and quotes.

TV news, on the other hand, is video driven. A station may decline to cover an otherwise good story due to lack of supporting video. The station might air video that you recorded on your phone, depending on the quality.

Radio reporters want short, to-the-point sound bites to supplement their pieces.

PITCHING A NEWS STORY

News tips are ideas for stories you can pass along to an editor or reporter. The reporter develops the story; we just plant the seed. If you think of a news tip, check with the Public Affairs staff for advice on which news agencies might be interested.

Remember, TV news needs visuals, so think in terms of video when you want TV coverage. Assignment editors also appreciate “self-contained” stories -- a convenient single location where interviews can be conducted and supporting video shot.

ISSUING A NEWS RELEASE

One way to get your message out to the public is by issuing a **news release**. This can be about a new county program, a major award, key personnel appointments, or to explain or expand on a subject that has already been reported.

News operations receive hundreds of news releases each week. So keep yours brief, to the point, and be sure it contains all the information reporters need to develop a story. The fewer calls they have to make, the more likely your release will be used for a story. Small newspapers will often “pick up” a particularly interesting or timely release and run it as is.

A news release should cover the 5 Ws -- **who, what, where, when** and **why** -- along with a contact name and phone number. Keep it to one page; assignment editors are looking for a few key facts, not a long, complicated report. Mid-morning is usually a good time to send out a news release because it allows time to obtain supporting comments and photos or video.

Issue a **media advisory** when you want to invite reporters and photographers to cover something, such as a news conference or special event. An advisory is usually sent out a day or two prior.

If it is an **emergency** item, try to give the media at least an hour lead time. The most important facts in a media advisory are the date, time, place and a contact name and number.

Distributing your release: County departments may send out their own news releases and media advisories or you can have Public Affairs do it for you. Just prepare a draft release and forward it to PressRelease@pbc.gov. The Public Affairs distribution chain includes e-mailing approximately 60 local news agencies, posting to the county's home page, social media, and circulating internally to commissioners and administrators. Public Affairs also keeps a copy on file for public records purposes.

CALLING A NEWS CONFERENCE

When you want to make a major announcement about county government, or if several reporters are calling for comment about the same issue or topic, it may be best to schedule a news conference. That way, all questions can be addressed and any other appropriate information dispensed at the same time.

Any county department, division or office may call a news conference, but the county administrator and the Public Affairs director should be notified. Public Affairs can provide guidance on when and where to hold your news conference, who should be present, what communication equipment may be needed, and whether there are any visuals that might be helpful. Be sure to send out a media advisory a day or two before the news conference is scheduled.

WHEN A REPORTER CALLS

Being interviewed by phone

Newspaper and radio reporters gather most of their information by phone and text messaging. If you are contacted for a phone interview, try to learn as much as you can on the subject. If you know someone who is more knowledgeable, see if they would prefer to do the interview.

During your conversation with the reporter, refrain from using “bureaucratese,” inside jargon, and acronyms. These terms may be familiar to you, but not to the general public.

A radio reporter will usually want to record the conversation, possibly for broadcast later. It could also be a live, on-the-air conversation. Either way, this should be cleared beforehand.

A print reporter may also ask to record the conversation. This saves time and helps ensure accuracy of quotes and statements.

Note: You do not have to agree to be recorded, but if you do, by law, the interviewer must have your permission before proceeding.

Once the reporter has finished asking questions, you may offer any pertinent information you think should be included but was not asked. (Again, do not mention anything you have discussed with another reporter.) Get the interviewer’s name and phone number in case you need to research a particular question or you think of something else later that might be helpful to them.

Being interviewed on camera

When you are doing a TV interview:

- 1) Avoid wearing loud or contrasting clothing colors and bulky, shiny or noisy jewelry.
- 2) Comb your hair and check your appearance.
- 3) Ask the interviewer approximately how long the interview will run and what questions or topics will be covered.
- 4) Look at the interviewer, not the camera.
- 5) Do not feel pressured to respond. If you don’t know the answer to a particular question, it’s okay to say, “I’m really not sure, I’ll check on that and get back to you.”
- 6) Listen carefully to the interviewer’s comments, not just the questions. Politely correct any misinformation or errors that may arise.

DO'S AND DON'TS OF GIVING INTERVIEWS

The following guidelines will help you be more confident when answering press questions.

DO

- 1) Prepare thoroughly. Have your responses ready, but do not memorize or read them.
- 2) Present your points first. Even if the exact question isn't asked, state your most important information near the beginning.
- 3) Speak simply and concisely. Try to answer in 10 to 20-second segments that can stand alone as sound bites.
- 4) Provide additional sources, and keep a list of names and numbers of other people who may be more familiar with certain facts and details.

DO NOT

- 1) Lose your temper. Keep your cool at all times, regardless of provocation. A reporter can always edit out a hostile question, but you can't edit out your angry response.
- 2) Speak off the record. Regardless of your relationship with the media, any information you give "off the record" could still be used.
- 3) Respond with "no comment." This implies guilt, ignorance or that you are hiding something. It is better to say, "We're looking into that," or "Let me get back to you with an answer."
- 4) Guess or make up an answer. If you aren't sure of the facts, ask to call the reporter back with the correct information.

CORRECTING AN ERROR

Everyone makes mistakes, and reporters are no exception. They may create the wrong impression, misspell a person's name, or state an incorrect fact, figure or date. By keeping track of news stories, we will be more aware of when an error has occurred and, depending upon the severity, what to do about it. To help you stay apprised of news pertaining to county government, Public Affairs posts local newspaper clippings on the intranet each day.

Before taking any action, make sure everything was done on our end to provide accurate information in a timely manner. If you are annoyed by a quote or headline, but the overall story is accurate, you should probably let it go.

Note: Newspaper reporters are not necessarily responsible for the headline accompanying a story. Headlines are often written or changed by copy editors after the reporter has filed the story.

Don't be offended if someone else who disagrees with your position is quoted in the same story. Part of a journalist's job is to verify facts through independent sources; sometimes it will be contrary to the county's official position. Presenting contrasting viewpoints does not mean the reporter did not believe you, only that someone else sees the situation differently.

After considering all this, if you still believe a news error needs to be addressed, call the Public Affairs Department at 355-2754. As liaison to reporters, Public Affairs may recommend one of the following:

- **Call or e-mail the reporter**

A friendly conversation should get the point clarified, and the reporter wants to have the correct facts, in case there is a follow-up story. If the same incorrect information is reported again, ask to speak to the managing editor (print media) or the news director (TV and radio).

- **Ask for a correction, not a retraction**

Demanding a retraction is for only the most egregious offenses, such as a news agency knowingly presenting false information intended to harm someone. Rarely is this the case, and it is very difficult to prove.

Asking for a correction will usually repair what was likely an honest mistake without pointing an accusing finger.

Newspapers often print their corrections on page two or on the editorial page. Seldom do they appear on the front page, even if the original error was in a front page story.

- **Write a letter to the editor**

This is a formal response for publication. It should be written in a clear, concise and diplomatic tone, pointing out the error, clarifying an issue, or adding information to a previous story.

Letters also may be used to counter an editorial. Do not write a letter to the editor to complain about incorrect information reported by another news agency.

All letters written to the news media by staff as an official statement or position of county government must be sent to Public Affairs in advance for review.

AND THAT'S A WRAP

Members of the news media are always on the lookout for interesting stories. County employees can help by keeping their eyes and ears open and suggesting news and feature ideas. The press is not “the enemy.” Most journalists are hard working professionals who want to get the story right.

When we cooperate with the news media, our message has a much better chance of reaching our residents, so be sure to return reporters' phone calls and e-mails promptly.

The Public Affairs Department can assist with formulating and disseminating your message about the accomplishments and activities of your department, division or office.

LOCAL MEDIA CONTACTS

DAILY NEWSPAPERS

ASSOCIATED PRESS (SUBSCRIPTION WIRE SERVICE)

2751 S. Dixie Highway
West Palm Beach, FL 33405
miami@ap.org, tspencer@ap.org

Main: (561) 832-3466
Miami: (305) 594-5825

PALM BEACH DAILY BUSINESS REVIEW

105 S. Narcissus Ave., Suite 308
West Palm Beach, FL 33401
law.com/dailybusinessreview

Main: (561) 820-2060

Deadlines: news and ads 1 p.m. two days prior; calendar & PSAs seven days prior

PALM BEACH DAILY NEWS (SHINY SHEET)

400 Royal Palm Way, Suite 100
Palm Beach, FL 33480
www.palmbeachdailynews.com

Main: (561) 820-3800

Printed daily September through May; Thursday and Sunday only in June, July and August

Deadlines: news noon; ads Monday and Wednesday noon

PALM BEACH POST

2751 S. Dixie Highway
West Palm Beach, FL 33405
pbp-newsroom@pbpost.com

Main: (561) 820-4663
News: (561) 820-4401

legals@pbpost.com (legal ads) Legal ads: (561) 820-3106

Deadlines: news 5 p.m.; ads 3 p.m. two days prior; legal ads 3 p.m. three days prior; calendar and PSAs two weeks prior

SUN SENTINEL

Coverage Area: southern Palm Beach County and Broward County
Broward/Palm Beach County Main Office
333 Southwest 12th Avenue
Deerfield Beach, FL 33442
newsfeeds@sunsentinel.com

Main: (561) 243-6615

Deadlines: news 5 p.m.; ads 3 p.m. two days prior

NON-DAILY NEWSPAPERS

COASTAL STAR (MONTHLY)

Coverage Area: Briny Breezes, Gulf Stream, Manalapan, Highland Beach, Lantana/Hypoluxo Island, Ocean Ridge, S. Palm Beach, County Pocket, coastal Delray Beach and Boca Raton

5114 N. Ocean Blvd.
Ocean Ridge, FL 33435
editor@thecoastalstar.com

Run date: first Sat. of month
Main: (561) 337-1553
Fax: (561) 337-1553

Deadlines: news and ads two weeks prior (camera-ready ads one week prior)

EL LATINO SEMANAL (SPANISH WEEKLY)

1419 Shirley Court
Lake Worth, FL 33460
Deadlines: Tuesday 5 p.m.

Run date: Friday
Main: (561) 310-5333

FLORIDA JEWISH JOURNAL (WEEKLY)

Delivered with Wednesday Sun-Sentinel
333 SW 12th Ave.
Deerfield Beach, FL 33442
jzizzo@sun-sentinel.com

Run date: Wednesday
News: (954) 596-5648

Deadlines: news Thursday 5 p.m.; calendar and PSAs two weeks prior

FLORIDA TREND (MONTHLY BUSINESS MAGAZINE)

490 First Avenue South, 8th Floor
month
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
pressrelease@floridatrend.com
Deadline: five weeks prior

Run date: 25th of prior
Main: (727) 821-5800
Fax: (727) 822-5083

LA GUIA NEWS (SPANISH WEEKLY)

4201 Westgate Ave., Suite A7
West Palm Beach, FL 33409
info@laguianews.com
Deadline: prior Monday

Run date: Wednesday
Main: (561) 328-8450

LAKE OKEECHOBEE NEWS (WEEKLY)

Coverage Area: Belle Glade, South Bay, Pahokee, and Canal Point
313 NW 4th Ave.
Okeechobee, FL 34974
okeenews@iniusa.org

(formerly THE SUN)
Run date: Wednesday
News: (863) 763-3134

Deadline: Monday noon

LAKE WORTH HERALD & COASTAL/GREENACRES OBSERVER (WEEKLY)

Coverage Area: Lake Worth, Lantana, Manalapan, Hypoluxo, Lake Clarke Shores, Greenacres, Palm Springs, and South Palm Beach

1313 Central Terrace
Lake Worth, FL 33460
lwherald@bellsouth.net

Run date: Thursday
Main: (561) 585-9387

Deadline: news and ads Tuesday noon

SEMENARIO ACCION (SPANISH WEEKLY)

3708 Georgia Avenue
WPB, FL 33405

Run date: Friday
Main: (561) 586-8699
Fax: (561) 586-2838

Deadlines: news Tues. 5 p.m.; ads Wed. noon
dayanelysgomez1972@gmail.com

semanario@hotmail.com

SOUTH FLORIDA BUSINESS JOURNAL (WEEKLY)

80 SW 8th Street, Suite 2710
Miami, FL 33130
southflorida@bizjournals.com
Deadline: eight days prior

Run date: Friday
Main: (786) 533-8200
Fax: (786) 533-8250

TOWN CRIER (WEEKLY)

Coverage Area: Royal Palm Beach, Wellington, The Acreage,
Loxahatchee, Westlake
12794 W. Forest Hill Blvd., Suite 33
Wellington, FL 33414
news@gotowncrier.com
Deadlines: news Tuesday noon; ads Monday 5 p.m.

Run date: Friday
News: (561) 793-7606
towncrierads@aol.com

WESTSIDE GAZETTE (WEEKLY)

Coverage Area: Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties
545 N.W. 7th Terrace
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311
wgazette@thewestsidegazette.com
Deadline: prior Friday

Run date: Thursday
Main: (954) 525-1489
Fax: (954) 525-1861

TV STATIONS

PBC TV (CABLE CHANNEL 20)

Palm Beach County Education and Government Television

301 N. Olive Avenue, Suite 1001

West Palm Beach, FL 33401

channel20@pbcgov.com

Main: (561) 355-4573

Fax: (561) 355-6685

WFLX FOX 29 (Fox)

1100 Banyan Blvd.

West Palm Beach, FL 33401

newstips@wptv.com

Main: (561) 845-2929

News: (561) 653-5700

WPBF 25 NEWS (ABC)

3970 RCA Blvd., Suite 7007

Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410

news@wpbfl.com

Main: (561) 694-2525

News: (561) 624-6397

Fax: (561) 624-1089

WPEC CBS 12 NEWS (CBS)

1100 Fairfield Drive

West Palm Beach, FL 33407

newstips@cbs12.com

mediainquiries@sbgvtv.com

Main: (561) 844-1212

News: (561) 881-0796

Fax: (561) 841-9556

WPTV NEWS CHANNEL 5 (NBC)

1100 Banyan Blvd.

West Palm Beach, FL 33401

newstips@wptv.com

Main: (561) 655-5455

News: (561) 653-5700

Fax: (561) 653-5719

WTVX 34 CW WEST PALM (CW)

1100 Fairfield Drive

West Palm Beach, FL 33407

newstips@cbs12.com

mediainquiries@sbgvtv.com

Main: (561) 681-3434

News: (561) 881-0796

Fax: (561) 684-9193

WWHB AZTECA 48 (SPANISH)

1100 Fairfield Drive

West Palm Beach, FL 33407

newstips@cbs12.com

mediainquiries@sbgvtv.com

Main: (561) 844-1212

News: (561) 881-0796

Fax: (561) 684-9193

RADIO STATIONS

I HEART MEDIA INC.

3071 Continental Drive
West Palm Beach, FL 33407

Main: (561) 616-6600
www.iheartmedia.com

Local Stations

WBZT 1230 AM (NEWS/TALK)

Requests: (800) 889-0267

WJNO 1290 AM (NEWS/TALK)

Requests: (561) 844-9566

WKGR 98.7 FM Gator (CLASSIC ROCK)

Requests: (866) 880-9870

WLDI 95.5 FM Wild 95 (TOP 40)

Requests: (866) 550-9550

WZZR 92.1 FM Real Radio (NEWS & TALK)

Requests: (877) 927-6969

WOLL 105.5 FM Kool (SOFT ROCK)

Requests: (888) 415-1055

WRLX 94.3 FM Mia (SPANISH)

Requests: (866) 972-9210

WAVW 92.7 FM Wave (COUNTRY)

Requests: (800) 562-9289

WZZR 93.3 FM Jam'n (R & B)

Requests: (561) 616-6600

WQOL 103.7 FM (OLDIES)

Requests: (800) 486-0103

HUBBARD RADIO

701 Northpoint Pkwy., Suite 500
West Palm Beach, FL 33407
www.hubbardsouthflorida.com

Main: (561) 616-4777

Local Stations

WIRK 103.1 FM (COUNTRY)

Requests: (855) 400-9475

WEAT 107.9 FM Sunny (ADULT CONTEMP)

Requests: (800) 919-1079

WRMF 97.9 FM (ADULT CONTEMP)

Requests: (877) 979-9763

WMBX 102.3 FM X-102.3 (URBAN)

Requests: (800) 969-1023

WMEN 640 AM (FOX SPORTS)

Requests: (844) 640-6464

WFTL 850 AM (NEWS/TALK)

Requests: (877) 850-8585

WSFS 95.9 FM and 106.9 FM

8895 N. Military Trail, Suite 206C
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410

Office: (561) 627-9966

Fax: (561) 627-9993

True Oldies Channel (50s, 60s and 70s)

Requests: (877) 960-9960

WLML 100.3 FM Legends Radio (ADULT STANDARDS)

760 U.S. 1, Suite 102,
North Palm Beach, FL 33408
Requests: (561) 685-9565

Main: (561) 469-6700

Info@LegendsRadio.com

WPOM 1600 AM Radio Vision Nouvelle (HAITIAN FRENCH TALK)

2465 Mercer Ave.
West Palm Beach, FL 33401
infojames@hotmail.com

Main: 561-242-8155

Fax: 561-623-7668

WPBR 1340 AM and 96.1 FM (HAITIAN FRENCH TALK)

2755 S. Federal Hwy., #15
Boynton Beach, FL 33435

Listener Line: (561) 734-1340

WDJA 1420 AM Universo Radio (SPANISH CHRISTIAN)

588 S. Haverhill Road

Main:

(561) 278-1420

West Palm Beach, FL 33415

www.universo1420.com

WWRF 1380 AM, 696.9 FM Radio Fiesta (SPANISH POP),

WLLY 99.5 FM, WAFC 590 AM

2326 Congress Ave., Suite 2A

Main:

(561) 721-9950

West Palm Beach, FL 33406

WPSP 1190 AM, 104.1 FM La Primera (SPANISH ADULT CONTEMPORARY)

5730 Corporate Way, Suite 210

On Air:

(561) 687-9350

West Palm Beach, FL 33407

diaz104.1fm@gmail.com

WAYF 88.1 FM The Way (CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN)

800 Northpoint Parkway, Suite 881

Main:

(561) 881-1929

West Palm Beach, FL 33407

On Air:

(855) 339-2936

www.wayfm.com

WRMB 89.3 FM Moody Radio South Florida (CHRISTIAN TALK)

1511 W. Boynton Beach Blvd.

Office Line: (561) 737-9762

Boynton Beach, FL 33436

Requests: (561) 737-9997

wrmb@moody.edu

Fax: (561) 737-9899

Contest Line: (561) 737-6035

WSWN Sugar 900 AM and 107.1 FM (GOSPEL)

2001 State Road 715

Office: (561) 996-2063

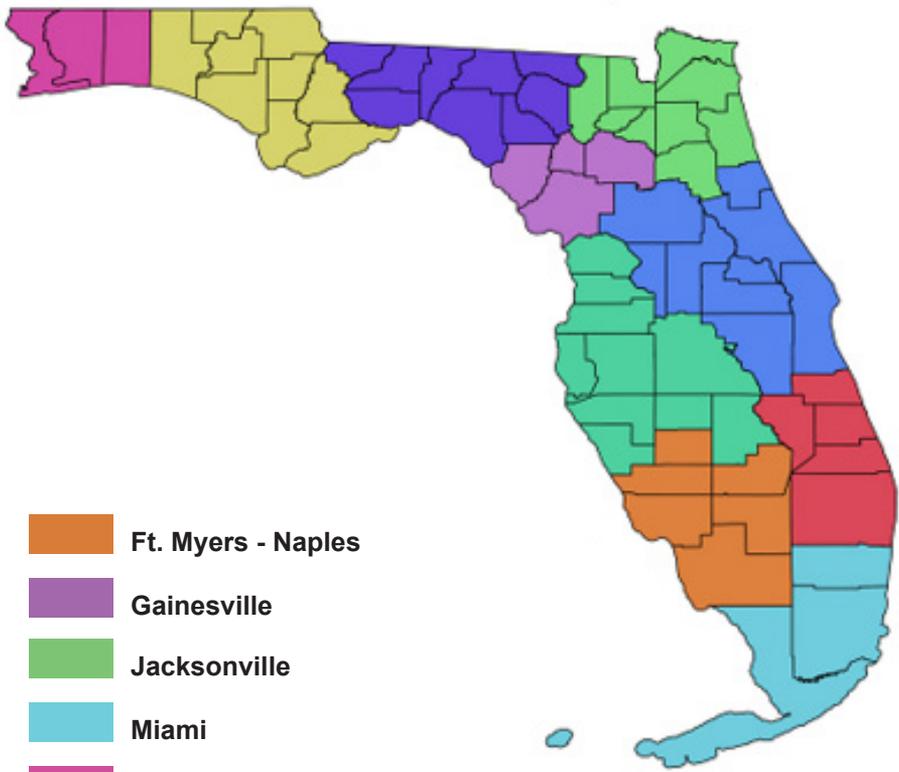
Belle Glade, FL 33430

Studio: (561) 996-9796

-- NOTES --

-- NOTES --

FLORIDA MEDIA MARKETS



-  Ft. Myers - Naples
-  Gainesville
-  Jacksonville
-  Miami
-  Mobile
-  Orlando
-  Panama City
-  Tallahassee
-  Tampa - St. Petersburg
-  West Palm Beach

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CONNECT WITH US! #PBCGOV



pbcc.gov



**Palm Beach County
Board of County Commissioners**

April 2024

Palm Beach County
Public Affairs Department
301 N. Olive Avenue, Suite 1102
West Palm Beach, 33401
561-355-2754