

# **County Administrator's** **ANNUAL REPORT**

**FISCAL YEAR**  
**2023 / 2024**





# ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE

*The County Administrator/CEO oversees 7,100 positions and balances a nearly \$7.9 billion budget.*

“

Palm Beach County's stunning natural beauty, thriving tourism and engaged community make it truly special a destination like no other. With world-class cultural events, renowned sports, award-winning county services and robust economic development, it's a paradise that draws millions of visitors, inspires businesses and invites excellence.

The foundation of this paradise begins with your county government's commitment to service. Together, with the support of the Board of County Commissioners, we work daily to build a community that fosters opportunity, strengthens its workforce, supports tourism and agriculture and ensures a second-to-none quality of life.

As we look to the future, my commitment as Palm Beach County's Administrator is unwavering. Among our top priorities is addressing the critical need for Affordable Workforce Housing. Every resident deserves a safe and stable place to call home. We are bringing together public and private partners to increase housing availability, leveraging all resources to make this goal a reality.

This Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Annual Report highlights the many projects, programs, and accomplishments that enhanced our community. Our dedicated staff work tirelessly to uphold the all encompassing excellence residents expect and deserve. With the continued leadership of the Board of County Commissioners, we will ensure that Palm Beach County remains vibrant and resilient. We are a community where residents and visitors alike can thrive.

*Verdenia C. Baker*

**Verdenia C. Baker**  
County Administrator

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# Table of CONTENTS

01	<b>PBC OVERVIEW</b> COUNTY PROFILE, BUDGET & BOND RATINGS	04
02	<b>FISCAL YEAR HIGHLIGHTS</b> 365 DAYS OF SERVICE STATE OF HOUSING DOING BUSINESS IN PBC TOURISM & ECONOMIC GROWTH TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS PROTECTING PBC GREEN SPACES IN THE COUNTY COMMUNITY WELL-BEING	08 10 12 14 17 20 22 26 28
03	<b>TEAMPBC</b> VOLUNTEERS, SERVICE & AWARDS	31

## Board of County Commissioners

BCC lineup ending FY 2024



(left to right, front row) Vice Mayor Maria G. Marino, Mayor Maria Sachs and Commissioner Gregg K. Weiss  
(left to right, back row) Commissioner Michael A. Barnett, Commissioner Marci Woodward,  
Commissioner Sara Baxter and Commissioner Mack Bernard

*This publication is a compilation of key highlights of Palm Beach County during Fiscal Year 2023/2024 (Oct. 1, 2023–Sep. 30, 2024).*

## OUR VISION

*Think strategically and anticipate the future. Ensure that decisions we make today will have lasting value.*



Palm Beach County  
Board of County Commissioners

## OUR MISSION

To drive a continuous improvement culture of excellence that achieves a measurably high level of public satisfaction.

## OUR GOALS

*Customer Focus  
Performance Measures  
Empowerment  
Continuous Quality  
Improvement  
Cost-Efficiency*

# OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES - FY 23/24

*At the January 30, 2024 Workshop, the Board of County Commissioners reorganized the strategic priorities and added a 7th priority known as Unsheltered Residents.*

### PUBLIC SAFETY



To ensure a safe, secure and peaceful community.

### INFRASTRUCTURE



Provide and maintain the needed structures, systems and transportation services that establish the foundation required to enhance the quality of life of every resident.

### UNSHELTERED RESIDENTS



Reduce homelessness by providing comprehensive support and resources to unsheltered families and individuals by utilizing evidence-based strategies to connect unsheltered residents with emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing solutions.

### HOUSING DEVELOPMENT



Ensure access to safe, suitable, and affordable housing for all Palm Beach County residents through the development and implementation of targeted programs that address their housing needs.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Promote programs and activities that protect, preserve and enhance natural resources while providing sustainable living and developing a climate of resilience.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Promote economic revitalization, business development and retention by driving the creation of employment opportunities while reducing disparities and improving the quality of life for everyone.

### SUBSTANCE USE & BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS

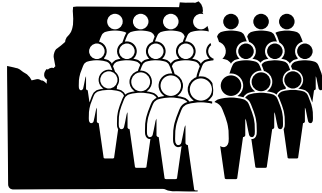


To address the substance misuse crisis and behavioral disorders by providing evidence-based prevention, medication-assisted treatment, and recovery support services for overall positive mental health and well-being.



# PROFILE

Located on the southeast coast, Palm Beach County is one of the largest in land mass of Florida's 67 counties. The county's 2,385 square miles include 1,977 miles of land and 408 miles of surface water. Palm Beach County is surrounded by Lake Okeechobee, the Everglades and Atlantic Ocean, all of which offer recreational opportunities in beautiful natural settings. Major industries in Palm Beach County, include but are not limited to tourism, agriculture, health services, construction and financial wealth management. The lifestyles of residents range from urban to rural, with the more densely populated areas along the coast. There are 39 municipalities within Palm Beach County. Each municipality enacts and enforces policies and laws within its incorporated boundaries. The exceptions are countywide ordinances specified in the Charter of Palm Beach County or ordinances agreed to by municipalities.



**1,545,905**  
POPULATION



MORE THAN  
**110** PARKS  
& RECREATIONAL  
FACILITIES



**45.2**  
MEDIAN AGE



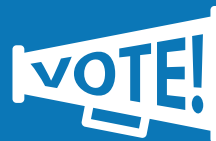
**\$104,000**  
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME  
FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR



**641,454**  
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS



**145**  
GOLF COURSES



**884,113**  
REGISTERED VOTERS



**5<sup>TH</sup>** BEST MID-SIZE  
AIRPORT IN THE U.S.

CONDE NAST TRAVELER'S 2024 READERS' CHOICE



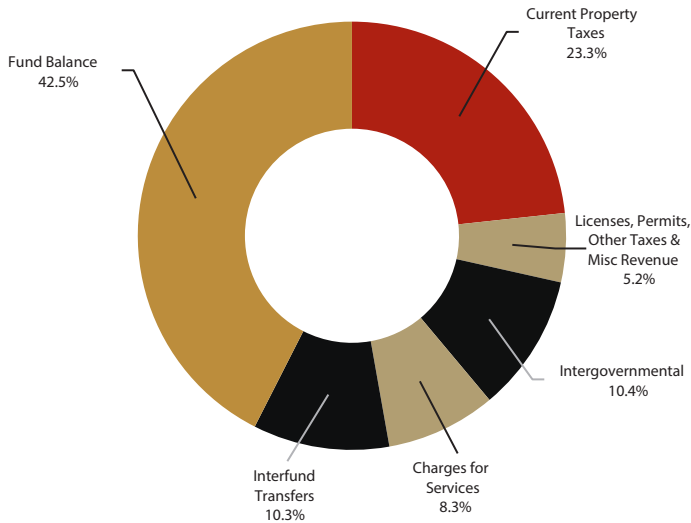
**47** MILES OF  
SHORELINE



# FY 2024 BUDGET

*Revenues and Expenditures as of September 30, 2024*

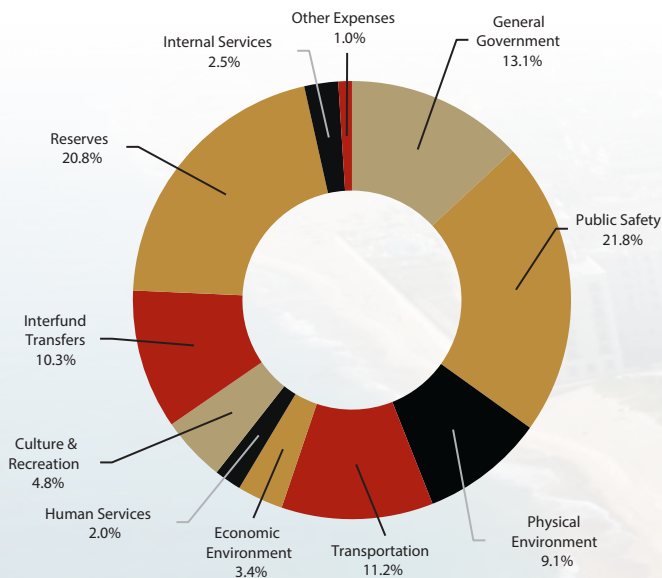
## Where the Money Comes From Total of all Funds \$7,873,039,892



## Palm Beach County Revenues (in millions)

	FY 2023	FY 2024	% Change
Current Property Taxes	\$1,673.2	\$1,834.0	9.6%
Licenses, Permits, Other Taxes & Misc Revenue	309.3	408.3	32.0%
Intergovernmental	629.5	816.5	29.7%
Charges for Services	627.5	652.9	4.1%
Interfund Transfers	750.2	812.1	8.3%
Fund Balance	2,720.7	3,349.2	23.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,710.4</b>	<b>\$7,873.0</b>	<b>17.3%</b>

## Where the Money Goes Total of all Funds \$7,873,039,892



## Palm Beach County Expenditures (in millions)

	FY 2023	FY 2024	% Change
General Government	\$699.2	\$1,034.2	47.9%
Public Safety	1,569.9	1,720.1	9.6%
Physical Environment	689.9	715.6	3.7%
Transportation	758.0	882.0	16.4%
Economic Environment	221.2	270.1	22.1%
Human Services	143.3	155.7	8.7%
Culture/Recreation	341.9	376.4	10.1%
Interfund Transfers	750.2	812.1	8.3%
Reserves	1,269.7	1,638.4	29.0%
Internal Services	189.3	191.8	1.3%
Other Expenses	77.8	76.6	-1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,710.4</b>	<b>\$7,873.0</b>	<b>17.3%</b>





# BOND RATINGS

*AAA Bond Rating by all of the Top Credit Rating Agencies*

Palm Beach County's AAA Bond Rating directly impacts the community's economic vitality and development. As the most visible indicator of credit worthiness, the county's AAA designation allows for unfettered access to the capital markets. The county's AAA Bond Rating translates into a lower cost of capital which directly impacts the quality and affordability of governmental services provided. The county's financial stability as measured by its bond rating serves as an inducement to businesses that are considering locating or relocating their operations and headquarters in Palm Beach County. While economic growth has its inherent social and infrastructure challenges, in order to maintain its AAA Bond Rating, Palm Beach County must continue to demonstrate prudent financial stewardship while promoting economic growth.

## General Obligation Bonds (GO)



*S&P Global Ratings  
Fitch Ratings  
Moody's*



*S&P Global Ratings  
Fitch Ratings  
Moody's*

## Revenue Bonds

### Airport Bonds



*S&P Global Ratings*



*Fitch Ratings*



*Moody's*

### Water Utility Bonds



*S&P Global Ratings  
Fitch Ratings  
Moody's*

Moody's	Standard & Poor's	Fitch	Investment Grade	Rating Grade Description
Aaa	AAA	AAA		Highest Grade Credit
Aa1 Aa2 Aa3	AA+ AA AA-	AA+ AA AA-		Very High Grade Credit
A1 A2 A3	A+ A A-	A+ A A-		High Grade Credit



# DAYS OF SERVICE



**5.2 MILLION**

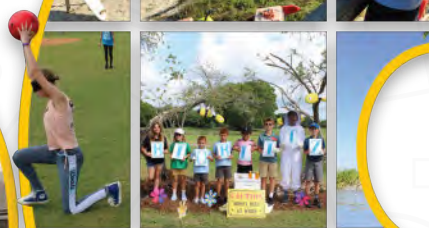
VISITORS ENJOYED  
PBC BEACHES



PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLETED  
**8,743 BACKGROUND CHECKS**  
FOR TOW TRUCK DRIVERS  
AND HOME CAREGIVERS



PARKS AND  
RECREATION RECORDED  
**319,002** ROUNDS OF GOLF



HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS A NATIONAL  
LEADER IN THE USE OF THE HOUSING & URBAN  
DEVELOPMENT SECTION **108** LOAN GUARANTEE PROGRAM.

IN THE 2024 FLORIDA STATE LEGISLATIVE  
SESSION, PALM BEACH COUNTY WAS  
APPROPRIATED **\$1 MILLION** TO RESTORE  
PEANUT ISLAND'S HISTORIC FACILITIES, INCLUDING  
THE PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY BUNKER.



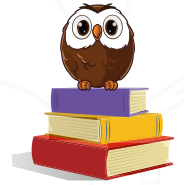
PBC ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS COMPLETED  
**\$4 MILLION** IN COUNTYWIDE DRAINAGE  
IMPROVEMENTS.



PUBLIC SAFETY PROVIDED OVER  
**100,000**  
ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF  
CONSUMER PROTECTION



# CE AT A GLANCE



**8,502,064**  
RESOURCES  
CHECKED OUT  
AT PALM BEACH  
COUNTY LIBRARIES



**212,446**  
PARTICIPATED  
IN LIBRARY EVENTS



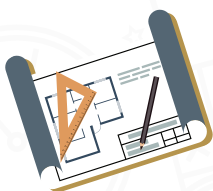
THE CODE COMPLIANCE DIVISION  
IMPLEMENTED THE  
BODY-WORN  
CAMERA PROGRAM



PBC WATER UTILITIES SERVED **635,000** RESIDENTS  
AND DISTRIBUTED **63 MILLION** GALLONS  
OF DRINKING WATER PER DAY



DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STAFF  
ASSISTED **956** BUSINESSES



PLANNING, ZONING & BUILDING  
ISSUED **70,224** BUILDING PERMITS



PBC FIRE RESCUE  
RESPONDED TO  
**157,474** CALLS



PALM BEACH COUNTY'S ELECTRIC VEHICLE PILOT  
PROGRAM THROUGH THE OFFICE OF RESILIENCE  
PROVIDED **13,896 KWH** OF ELECTRICITY, WHICH IS  
ABOUT **42,523 MILES** OF ELECTRICITY.

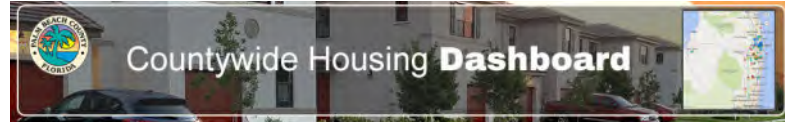


PBC FIRE RESCUE SERVED OVER  
**976,900** CITIZENS



# STATE OF HOUSING

Affordable and workforce housing are top priorities for Palm Beach County. Many families are struggling with high housing costs and crowded living spaces. People from all income levels are feeling the pinch of rising home prices and rent. To tackle these problems, the Department of Housing and Economic Development (DHED) developed a plan to examine what is needed and how to use federal, state and county funds to make housing more affordable at all levels. The goal is to ensure that more people have access to affordable and workforce housing options.



Bringing together available housing supply information in unincorporated areas and municipalities in one place for those looking for affordable workforce housing.

DHED focuses on vulnerable groups like veterans, seniors, people with disabilities and youth aging out of foster care. It makes things a bit easier and faster for these groups to get the support they need. DHED's current programs are working to increase the number of affordable homes for rent or purchase, help people finance their first homes and protect existing homeowners from losing their properties.

DHED's housing preservation activities included: down payment assistance, rehabilitation, emergency repairs and foreclosure prevention. **DHED expended \$8.3 MILLION to complete these activities.**

**Voters approved a \$200 MILLION BOND** in 2022 to support workforce and affordable housing. This money and other local funding fight the growing housing crisis. DHED put out three calls for new housing projects, covering workforce housing, affordable housing and homes for sale. These projects are moving forward and final approval will come from the Board of County Commissioners.

FY 2024/2025 budget contains **\$15 MILLION** allocated for creating and preserving affordable housing.

DHED, during FY 2023/2024, awarded **\$41 MILLION to 14 projects** resulting in **1,047 housing units** and **totaling \$363 MILLION** of development activity. *Projects typically take 18-24 months to complete so these projects are in progress.*

DHED, during FY 2023/2024, completed **561 housing units** using **\$23.6 MILLION** in county funding. **140 single-family** and **421 multi-family, totaling \$23,606,965.**



*Prosperity Village Cottage Homes, a new community dedicated to providing transitional housing for families on the path to self-sustainability and homeownership.*



Palm Beach County is no different from other communities; we also have a homeless population. In 2024, a one-day, 24-hour count found 2,126 homeless people in the county - a 9% increase from previous years. Seniors are the fastest-growing group of unsheltered people in the United States, and this is happening here, too. Experts think the number of homeless seniors could triple in the next five years as more baby boomers retire without sufficient savings to address increased housing costs, including the rising cost of insurance.

Law enforcement is often the first to interact with homeless people. In 2023, there were more than 3,000 calls to 911 about homelessness. To handle these situations better, the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO) runs a 40-hour, 5-day training program called Homeless Intervention Training. This program helps police, government workers and nonprofit groups work together to support the unsheltered more effectively.

Overnight Park Rangers also patrol locations to comply with Florida House Bill 1365. Signs around the county remind people that camping on public property isn't allowed. Palm Beach County has been working for years to support homeless people by providing services like motel vouchers, outreach teams, case management and a travel aid program that helps people return to family in other parts of the county. As of 9/30/24, 2,310 beds are available for the unsheltered throughout the county with assistance from agency partners. The beds are funded through various grants and ad valorem funding sources.

The county's efforts also include four housing resource centers which the county owns and has contracts in place for management of those resource centers. In 2012, the Senator Phillip D. Lewis Homeless Resource Center opened after several years of planning. Resources are also available at two locations in the Glades region. In March of 2024, the newest addition, the Central County Housing Resource Center opened.

Palm Beach County is committed to tackling the challenges of affordable/workforce housing and unsheltered residents. By focusing on key groups, using available funding and building partnerships with other organizations, the county is working to improve the lives of its most vulnerable residents.





# DOING BUSINESS IN PBC

As of September 30, 2024, the **county's unemployment rate stood at 3.6%**, compared to **Florida's rate of 3.3%** and the **national rate of 4.1%**.

Throughout FY 2023/2024, the Department of Housing and Economic Development (DHED) **invested \$3.4 MILLION**, directly supporting six economic development partners and two businesses. This strategic **funding initiative created or retained 2,840 jobs across the county**. Specifically, **1,716 jobs were created and 1,124 were retained**. On average, **every \$1,200 in county funding led to the creation or retention of one full-time job**, underscoring the effectiveness of the county's economic development strategy.

As one of Florida's largest counties, Palm Beach County is a vital economic hub for key sectors such as healthcare, tourism, education, finance and hospitality. The county's financial health is evident in its unemployment rate, which has remained below the national average for the fourth consecutive year.

Palm Beach County has **72,146 businesses and 671,880 employees**. Small businesses are the backbone of the county economy. **Businesses with 25 or fewer employees represent 94% of all businesses, and 76% of these businesses have**

**five or fewer employees**. In fact, **businesses with 25 or fewer employees** represent approximately one-third of all the employees within Palm Beach County. In the upcoming fiscal year, the county will continue to offer resources and guidance on becoming county-registered vendors to signify the importance of small-scale enterprises.

Additionally, **80% of the business loans provided through DHED were dispersed to minority or women-owned business enterprises, reflecting the county's commitment to equitable economic growth**.

DHED's business loan programs play a critical role in supporting local businesses. **In FY 2023/2024, DHED provided technical assistance and support to 956 businesses**. These efforts addressed various business needs, ranging from technical assistance to inquiries on county processes. Under the business loan program, **no more than 40% of a project's total cost can be through county loans**. Section 108 loans **granted three businesses a total of \$1,175,000**; these **same three were able to create 50 additional jobs**.



A Palm Beach County Library System library card can help local entrepreneurs become successful businesses. **An overall estimated annual cost savings of almost \$20 MILLION for entrepreneurs was achieved through 34,127 uses of databases** that offer business templates, market analysis, legal forms, professional development training, and other business topics as well as technology classes that **drew an attendance of over 4,000 individuals**. Reduction in business operating costs and general economic support for Palm Beach County also came in the form of tax preparation, free use of meeting, conference and study spaces, tech hardware and software, as well as digital production studios, illustrating the Library's significant contribution to the economy and local business development.

The Palm Beach County Office of Equal Business Opportunity (OEBO) continues to pursue its mission of ensuring small, minority, and women-owned business enterprises (S/M/WBEs) are included in the county's procurement process. This effort has led to a notable increase in participation and certification, reinforcing the county's commitment to diversity and equity in contracting.

To support these businesses, OEBO provides training sessions and workshops designed to help them navigate the procurement process, improve business practices, and achieve vendor certification. These sessions cover key topics such as bidding on county contracts, business development, and the certification process.

In January 2024, the Board of County Commissioners approved amendments to the program, raising the gross annual revenue size standards for small business enterprises. Additionally, the changes allow S/M/WBEs performing on contracts with business participation goals to count toward the graduation requirements of the Equal Business Opportunity Program, further fostering long-term growth and success.

As of 9/30/24

OEBO hosted and participated in  
**79 trainings and workshops.**

More than **19,000 business/finance companies** and **2,600 financial firms** call Palm Beach County home.



- Total Number of Certified Businesses: **726 (S/M/WBEs)**
    - Newly Certified: **122 (S/M/WBEs)**
    - Recertified: **138 (S/M/WBEs)**
- (S/M/WBEs) - Small, minority, or women-owned businesses enterprises*



*(OEBO) hosted its Mind Your Business 5th Annual Youth Entrepreneurship Forum at the PBC Planning, Zoning, and Building Chamber on August 24.*



*(OEBO) celebrated Small Business Week 2024 from April 29 to May 3 with a series of engaging events.*

# TOURISM & ECONOMIC GROWTH

Tourism is **one of the largest components** of Palm Beach County's economy. It supports the jobs of over **92,000** hardworking people and significantly adds to the local economy.

## FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024 TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS



Over **9.62 MILLION** people visited Palm Beach County, which is more than the population of New York City.

Visitors staying in local hotels paid **\$86.7 MILLION in bed taxes**, which helps to fund the Palm Beach County Convention Center, two Major League Baseball (MLB) stadiums, the Palm Beach County Sports Commission, Palm Beach County Film and Television Commission, the marketing of Palm Beach County and its cultural activities.

**Tourists spent \$7.15 BILLION** on things like hotels, food, shopping and entertainment.

These record-breaking numbers mean more financial stability for businesses, more jobs for workers and additional opportunities for the community.

Tourism is more than vacations. In Palm Beach County, it creates jobs, grows the economy and supports our entire community. From sports and equestrian events to airport growth and visitor spending. Tourism had a record breaking year and continues to raise the bar for the future. With so many exciting events and attractions, new visitors will continue to play a big part in keeping Palm Beach County strong, successful and ever changing.

Tourism's overall economic impact in The Palm Beaches is  
**\$10.5 BILLION.**



## SPORTS TOURISM SCORES BIG FOR PALM BEACH COUNTY

Palm Beach County is one of the top sports destinations in the United States. We have four Major League Baseball (MLB) teams that conduct Spring Training at two MLB stadiums. The Palm Beach County Sports Commission (PBCSC) hosts major sporting events that attract thousands of athletes, families and fans.

### 2024 Sports Achievements

People attending sports events booked **338,317 hotel nights**. That is like every hotel room in the county being full for almost an entire year! Sports tourism brought in **\$329 MILLION** for the local economy, including **\$83 MILLION in hotel revenue**. This success shows that people love coming to Palm Beach County for sports, it helps local hotels, restaurants and stores thrive.

The Sports Business Journal recognized Palm Beach County as one of the top five “Cities Without a Big Five Team” category, which represents destinations without its own local sports franchise participating in the NFL, MLB, NBA, NHL and MLS. Palm Beach County is committed to sports development, events, marketing and infrastructure.





## THE PREMIER DESTINATION FOR EQUESTRIAN ENTHUSIASTS

The Winter Equestrian Festival (WEF) is the world's biggest annual horse competition, and it is here, in Palm Beach County! Riders, trainers and fans from all over the world come to see these amazing horses and athletes in action. In Fiscal Year 2023/2024, WEF had a **\$403.6 MILLION** impact on our economy, a **14% increase** from the prior fiscal year.



### 2024 WEF By the Numbers

**3,792 jobs** were created in areas like horse care, hospitality, and tourism.

Workers in these industries **earned \$117.9 MILLION**.

**\$296.7 MILLION** was spent on horse-related needs like stables, feed, and training.

**\$98.7 MILLION** was spent by tourists on things like hotels, dining, shopping, and transportation.

## FLYING HIGH ABOVE THE PREVIOUS RECORDS



Palm Beach International Airport (PBI) had its busiest year ever in 2024, with more than **8.2 MILLION passengers** flying in and out. This is more travelers than the number of record-breaking passengers before the pandemic. Airlines added new or returning flight options, mostly seasonal, from PBI to destinations out west, including Los Angeles (LAX), St. Louis, MO (STL), Dallas-Love (DAL) and Denver (DEN). The service to Chicago-O'Hare (ORD) has extended from winter seasonal to almost year-round. PBI is committed to adding routes, destinations and significant capacity for air travel.

### Why it Matters

Airlines pay less than **\$4 per passenger** to use PBI, making it one of the most cost-effective airports in the United States. **Palm Beach County's airports support 32,000 jobs** for workers in areas like security, maintenance and customer service.



# TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY



## ROADWAY NETWORK



We have an active community with people who walk, run and bicycle. Palm Beach County **received \$639,200 in federal grant dollars** for a program called Safe Streets for All by developing a Safety Action Plan. This plan will identify projects that can enhance the safety of Palm Beach County's transportation network, such as bike lanes.

A Countywide Transportation Master Plan, a multijurisdictional process and planning framework, is in the works. It will provide a vision for transportation and mobility across the county that safely connects people to places. Each jurisdiction will be able to select appropriate recommendations fitting the needs of each unique community while coordinating regionally significant transportation corridors through the recommended framework.

Flashing Yellow Arrows (FYA) are not new in Palm Beach County. Since the Traffic Division of the Engineering and Public Works Department **in Fiscal Year 2019/2020 first implemented FYA left turns, 52 intersections have been equipped with the devices.** Recently, a grant from the United States Department of Transportation **awarded \$4.4 MILLION for the installation of FYA left and right turns at 28 signalized intersections countywide.** FYA has the same meaning as the circular green traffic signal. While the arrow is flashing yellow, traffic may turn, provided it is safe, with a gap between pedestrian and car traffic.



EPW has **more than 250 active roadway production projects** in progress.



Received and responded to over **7,600** citizen inquiries concerns and requests for service.

EPW **added about 31,800 linear feet of designated bike lanes** on resurfaced roads.



## IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE LIFE AND LEADERSHIP OF

**Clinton B. Forbes**

Clinton B. Forbes, 55, served as Palm Tran's Executive Director from November 2015 until his untimely passing in November 2023.

Clinton was a vibrant leader in Palm Beach County and an advocate for public transit. His memory inspires all who knew him.

Palm Tran introduced an innovative “alternative transportation” option for eligible Palm Tran Connection riders with UZURV. The service operates similarly to Uber and Lyft; however, drivers undergo additional paratransit training, background checks, drug testing and regular vehicle inspections.

**Trips cost customers the same, at \$3.50 per trip and provide the same door-to-door service as Connection.** UZURV has allowed for better trip planning and group dispatching, reduced travel time and improved the overall quality of service.

Lyft offers additional services through the “Choice Program” for Connection customers, further improving the efficiency of its services. Eligible riders who opt into this program utilize a Lyft-operated vehicle instead of a Connection vehicle.

**UZURV averages around 500 trips each day and nearly 200 trips daily for Lyft.** These numbers are in addition to the traditional Connection daily service of almost 5,000 scheduled trips each day.

In May 2024, ridership on Palm Tran fixed-route buses reached its highest level since the pandemic, with **860,459 passengers**. This increase is partly thanks to the Get on the Bus Challenge, a competition-style marketing campaign that encouraged commuters to participate to win prizes and free Palm Tran rides. **Over 500 new and experienced riders** joined in, **accumulating 16,000 rides**.

Two new programs launched in September 2024. The pilot program, “BusLink,” started on September 3rd. **The program replaced routes in low-ridership areas and provided \$8 vouchers for Uber or Yellow Cab taxis.** These vouchers can connect passengers to high-frequency bus routes in the area, enhancing travel options by giving efficient first- and last-mile options. The pilot program is operational in Riviera Beach, Royal Palm Beach, and Boca Raton. Palm Tran has reinvested the resources saved from the lower-productivity modified fixed routes towards high-demand areas across the county, thereby improving route frequencies and strengthening our community's transportation network. **In the 27 days of operation, “BusLink” had 1,184 rides.**

Palm Tran launched its other new service, The Port St. Lucie Express, on September 23rd. The daily, premium coach service provides direct weekday bus service from Port St. Lucie to downtown West Palm Beach. Many workers commute between the two cities to work in the much larger West Palm Beach and live in Port St. Lucie. **The \$3 price tag is affordable and less stressful for commuters.** The Florida Department of Transportation sponsored a grant for the service.







From four wheels to the railway, the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA), operator of Tri-Rail, reported that the train system served **4.4 MILLION** riders in 2024, marking the first time since 2019 that ridership exceeded **4 MILLION** riders in a single year. Between 2012 and 2019, Tri-Rail consistently surpassed **4 MILLION** annual rides, with ridership growing by **1%** year over year, culminating in its highest ridership year in 2019.

Tri-Rail's full ridership recovery was reported last year in March 2024, with an average of **15,000** weekday rides and **8,000** weekend rides that month.

Palm Beach County continues to benefit from enhanced regional connectivity with Brightline, a high-speed rail service linking key destinations across Central and South Florida. Operating **18 daily round trips** between Miami and West Palm Beach, **16 extending to Orlando**. Brightline provides residents and visitors with a sustainable transportation option. In 2024, it celebrated its first full year of Orlando service, reinforcing its role in regional mobility.

Ridership grew by nearly **500,000** passengers in 2024, a **40%** increase over 2023's **1.23 MILLION** riders. Brightline trains traveled over **5 MILLION MILES**. That is like taking **200 trips around the world**, taking millions of vehicles from Florida's roadways. This means the shift to rail travel also cut CO2 emissions by nearly **100,000 tons**, equal to planting **3 MILLION trees**. Brightline is expanding its fleet to meet the new demands.



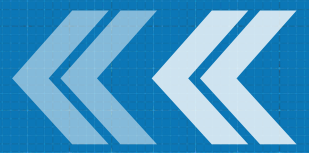
# TRI RAIL<sup>TM</sup>







# CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS



## PROJECTS COMPLETED IN FY24



### Supervisor of Elections Production Facility



The new Supervisor of Elections Production Facility, spanning approximately 157,000 square feet, includes an all operations parking garage with 311 spaces and a project budget of \$59 million.

### Prosperity Village Cottage Homes



A \$6.1 million project with the West Palm Beach Housing Authority features 17 cottage homes (6 two-bedroom/one-bath, 6 two-bedroom/two-bath, 5 three-bedroom/two-bath and community center).

### PBC Sheriff's Office Headquarters



The original facility, built in 1983, expanded in the 1990s to the current 200,000 square feet. The recent project hardened the building to bring it to a coding standard for sustaining major weather-related events. The project revision had a final cost of \$56.7 million.

### Central County Housing Resource Center



The Central County Housing Resource Center is 20,000 square feet, provides 75 beds and cost \$17.6 million to build.

### Fire Station #40 in Boynton Beach



The \$5 million, 6,637-square-foot single-story facility with two bays, nine bunk rooms, a generator, water retention systems, and signalization opened in March 2024 as Palm Beach County Fire Rescue's 50th station.

The Department of Housing and Economic Development (DHED) provided financial assistance **totaling \$3.5 MILLION** in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). These CDBGs funded **10 capital projects**. The **nine municipal projects**, representing various park and code enforcement activities, were completed in Belle Glade, South Bay, Mangonia Park, Lake Worth Beach, Lantana, Lake Park and the Village of Palm Springs. The **single county project occurred** at Wabasso Drive/L-2 Bridge. Collectively, these projects benefitted approximately **84,000 residents**.



## PROJECTS NEARING COMPLETION

### Canyon Branch Library



The \$30 million, 33,000-square-foot Canyon Branch Library near Canyon Town Center in Boynton Beach will open soon with a drive-through book return, podcasting space, charging stations, a meeting room and a community plaza.

### District 1 - Marine Unit Facility



The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office District 1/Marine Unit Facility, a 27,000-square-foot building with three marine work bays and a \$21 million construction cost, is nearing completion.



# ONGOING PROJECTS

➤ **The Vista Center Expansion**, a 66,000-square-foot project with a new three-level parking garage and additional space for the Building Division staff, is in the design phase with an estimated construction cost of \$36 million.

➤ **The Community Services Replacement Building**, a 60,000-square-foot project, is in the design phase with a budget of \$27 million.

➤ **The Emergency Operations Center Connector**, currently in design, will provide a hardened link between the EOC and Four Points with an estimated construction cost of \$11 million.

## Concourse B Expansion at Airports



Palm Beach International Airport (PBI) is expanding Concourse B with jet bridges, seating, restaurants, a nursing suite, and a sensory room for travelers with autism.

➤ **Fire Station 92**, a 20,000-square-foot facility with a construction cost of \$17.4 million, is in progress with groundbreaking expected in January 2025.

➤ **Fire Station 49**, an 18,000-square-foot facility with a construction cost of \$15 million, is currently under construction.

➤ **Fire Station 24**, a 14,000-square-foot, three-bay facility, is currently in the design phase.

## Mosquito Control Facility



Currently under construction, spans approximately 27,000 square feet across all buildings.

➤ **The Animal Care & Control Renovation/Expansion**, a 90,000-square-foot project, is currently in the design phase.

➤ **The Medical Examiner's Office Expansion**, now planned as new construction instead of a renovation, is in the design phase with an estimated cost of \$47 million.

➤ **The South County Administrative Complex Redevelopment**, estimated at \$180 million, is currently in the design phase.

➤ **The Brooks Development**, featuring 22 single-family homes, has completed design and permitting, with an RFP to select a developer scheduled for December 2024.



## Notes

Project Budget is not construction cost, it is the total approved to implement the project (i.e., staff cost, construction, design, equipment, etc.)

Construction cost is hard construction expenditures only (i.e., no Fixtures, Furniture and Equipment (FFE), design, staff, etc.).

➤ **The Main County Courthouse Buildout**, covering approximately 125,000 square feet on the 7th and 8th floors, is in design with a project budget of \$69 million.

➤ **The 20 Mile Bend OHV/Racetrack Park Project** will issue an RFP in December 2024 to find a development partner for constructing an OHV Park, racetrack, or a combination of both.

## Canyon District Park - Phase 2



The \$33.5 million project, under construction, includes multipurpose fields, baseball fields with batting cages, sand volleyball courts, an ADA playground, pavilions, restrooms, concessions, parking, and infrastructure for all ages.

## The Mack Bernard Park Neighborhood Center



The 11,000-square-foot Mack Bernard Park Neighborhood Center, formerly Gramercy Park, is under construction at a cost of \$11.3 million and will feature a multipurpose room, classrooms, a kitchen, offices, parking lots, and a mulch-surfaced walking trail.

## Green Cay Phase II

Palm Beach County Water Utilities' Green Cay project, in phase II, features an advanced purification facility, education center, public park, and a process to recharge groundwater without aquifer withdrawals, highlighting technology's role in environmental protection.

## FIRE RESCUE



Palm Beach County Fire Rescue's Community Risk Reduction Division safeguarded homes by installing **786 smoke and carbon monoxide alarms** in **200 homes in Belle Glade**, utilizing an **\$85,600 FEMA grant**. Fire Rescue is proud to be the first department in Palm Beach County to carry whole blood in the field, a lifesaving initiative that has proven invaluable in saving lives.

This year, the program expanded to **six EMS Captains** covering the county's most rural areas. Both Trauma Hawk helicopters also carry whole blood. This allows for cutting-edge, life-saving treatment to more residents. In Fiscal Year 2023/2024, Fire Rescue administered whole blood **70 times**, further cementing the leadership in trauma care and pre-hospital emergency services.

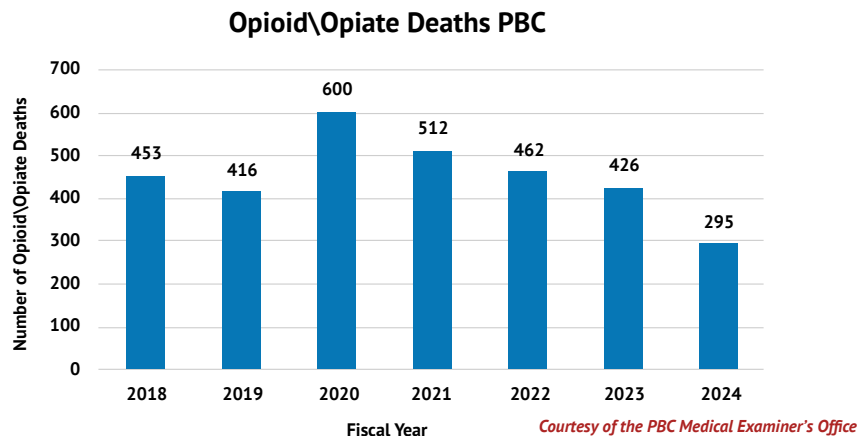
## SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO) strengthens community bonds through initiatives like "Conversations with a Deputy," where residents engage directly with deputies to foster trust. Deputies in the Lake Worth area mentored students from three local elementary schools with a trip to LEGOLAND in Orlando as part of a yearlong mentorship initiative.





## » OPIOID EPIDEMIC RESPONSE



The county works to combat the opioid epidemic through the 2024 Substance Use and Co-Occurring Disorders Master Plan, which emphasizes recovery-ready communities and personalized care for individuals with addiction. An additional, new location of The Recovery Community Hub opened in Lake Worth Beach, providing crucial support and resources to individuals dealing with substance use issues.

## » INFORMATION SYSTEMS SERVICES

- **Data Protection:** Implemented multi-factor authentication to secure private data.
- **Cybersecurity Awareness:** Collaborated with law enforcement to address cyber threats and educated residents on online safety, especially during election season.

## » WATER UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

Palm Beach County Water Utilities Department (PBCWUD) supplies clean water to its customers. The county's drinking water met and exceeded state and federal standards for another consecutive year, with zero quality violations. **Licensed professionals monitor water quality 24/7 and conduct over 50,000 water quality analyses annually.**

PBCWUD led the way in asset management, **achieving ISO-55001 recertification** as the first utility in North America to earn this recognition. By following asset management principles and strategic lifecycle planning, PBCWUD ensures maximum value for stakeholders and customers.





## ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL DIVISION



County staff worked with community partners to **spay and neuter 12,080 animals**, up from **10,396** in 2023. Residents contributed **24,142 hours of foster care**, enabling **12,071 days** that animals did not need to stay in shelters.

## DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



**Disaster Preparedness:** DEM conducted exercises at radiological reception centers, continuity sites and for post-disaster redevelopment, addressing system gaps to enhance emergency readiness.

## 9-1-1 PROGRAM SERVICES DIVISION

**Emergency Services Modernization:** Launched a high-speed Emergency Services IP Network (ESInet) allowing 911 centers to receive texts and images, with future plans to add video capabilities for enhanced emergency response.

## CONSUMER AFFAIRS DIVISION

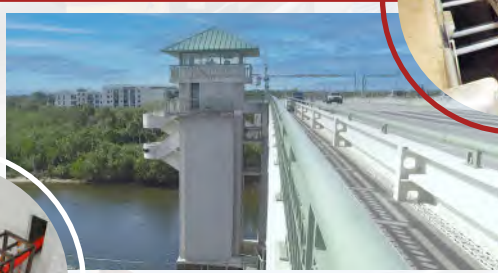
**Community Safety:** Conducted **100,000+** safety activities, including licensing, enforcement, and mediation. **Human Trafficking Awareness:** Introduced an educational video for adult entertainers during ID badging to raise awareness and promote safety.



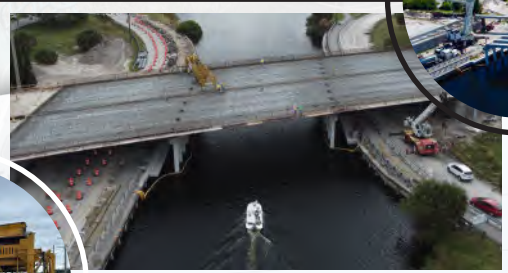
## ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS

The Palm Beach County Department of Engineering and Public Works is vital in maintaining and enhancing critical infrastructure. Recent projects include significant upgrades to the Donald Ross Road Bridge, which links Jupiter and Palm Beach Gardens. Modernizing the bridge's hydraulic and electrical systems ensures long-term functionality and reliability, with the project completed ahead of schedule. The 6th Avenue South Bridge in Lake Worth underwent a complete transformation. Demolishing and rebuilding the original structure incorporated modern amenities such as upgraded sidewalks, improved stormwater management, and dedicated bike lanes, offering all users safer and more efficient travel. **The improved bridge replacement was an \$11 MILLION infrastructure project.**

In the process of the Lyons Road Widening Project, in 2023, the county continued the improvement, construction and conversion into a multilane divided roadway. This portion of the multiyear project spanned from L-38 Canal moving north to Atlantic Avenue.



Donald Ross Road  
Bridge



6th Avenue South  
Bridge



Lyons Road  
Widening Project





# Green Spaces >>> IN THE COUNTY

## >> COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

The Sacred Arts Tour included seven Tibetan monks from the Drepung Gomang Monastery, who, for one week, delivered various programs for the public emphasizing peace, empathy, harmony and tolerance. Agriculture education is vital in Palm Beach County. In FY 2023/2024, **Cooperative Extension held 212 urban horticulture events**. Nearly **9,000 participants learned indoor gardening techniques, edible perennials, sustainable landscaping principles and pest management**. Besides all the training, agriculture and educational events, different exhibits make their way through Mounts Botanical Garden. Origami in the Garden, Stickwork and Ribbit the Exhibits I and II are popular and draw people from all over.



## >> PARKS & RECREATION

The Therapeutic Recreation Section of Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation proudly hosted its first-ever Blind Sports Day. A one-day event dedicated to promoting inclusivity through adaptive sports. **Sixty-two participants** ranging from **six to 74 years old** joined **19 athletes**, and **21 volunteers** used auditory cues to play Beep Baseball, Boccia and Beep Kickball. This event inspired children and adults to engage in healthy competition while fostering connections, highlighting the importance of accessibility in recreation.



## >> RESILIENCE

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection-Resilient Florida Program **awarded \$4 MILLION to upgrade and replace the Prosperity Farms Road Bridge over the C-17 Canal**. The Office of Resilience (OOR) helped to write and submit a grant application for the Engineering and Public Works project. The project will prepare the area for sea level rise by raising the new bridge more than two feet. It will also add improved stormwater drainage facilities while increasing the bridge's lifespan.



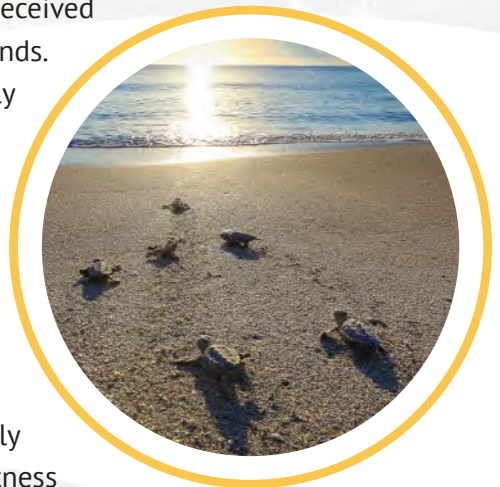




The growth and expansion of green spaces are very important to Palm Beach County. Officials are continuously working to improve air quality and mitigate climate change. The Office of Resilience and the Parks and Recreation Department are pursuing these goals. These departments collaborated with the local nonprofit organization Community Greening. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency **approved the \$1 MILLION grant to help increase tree canopy coverage** in the Glades communities. The project will plant **376 trees across six county parks** and give away **2,000 native and fruit trees to Glades residents**. Without a healthy landscape and clean water, none of the other things we love about Palm Beach County would be possible. In addition, in 2024, **Palm Beach County acquired over 60 acres of land** that will become county Natural Areas in Palm Mar, protecting the land and storing and filtering water for future generations.

## » ENVIRONMENTAL

In spring 2024, the Royal Palm Beach Natural Area's trail system received recognition for its excellent use of Recreational Trail Program funds. Thanks to these funds, significant new enhancements include autism-friendly signs, informational kiosks and better wayfinding for hiking and equestrian trails, shade shelters with benches, boardwalks, and trail markers. Environmental Resource Management completed two more restoration projects in our estuaries this year: Sawfish Island and Tarpon Cove. Both created seagrass, oyster reef and mangrove habitats, bringing a brighter future for animals, plants, water and people.



Palm Beach County's beaches provide a vital natural habitat, especially during sea turtle nesting season, which draws visitors worldwide to witness this remarkable ritual. Longtime residents understand that traditional lights and flashlights can disrupt the turtles' biological needs. To protect them, regulatory lighting standards require the use of red lights along public beach areas, as they do not disturb the turtles. The county's efforts have **achieved a 97% compliance rate with lighting inspections along all beachfront properties.**



The county **invested \$5.89 MILLION** in dune restoration and beach re-nourishment projects to combat erosion and protect the coastline.

*Coral Cove and Singer Island beaches were re-nourished during FY 2023/2024.*



Last year, **1.4 MILLION cubic yards** of sand were placed on county beaches, enough to fill **150 Jupiter Lighthouses.**

# COMMUNITY WELL-BEING



## » AIRPORTS

Air travel can be anxiety-inducing for many people. The overwhelming crowds, flight delays, and tight schedules can make the entire experience feel like a nightmare. Fortunately, Palm Beach International Airport partnered with the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office to help comfort travelers. Specially trained therapy dogs and their handlers walk through the terminals to provide a sense of relief for passengers. Interacting with these animals has been shown to reduce stress and offer emotional support to those in need.



## » COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Cooperative Extension created a new program for The Glades, bringing together residents from South Bay, Pahokee and Belle Glade for the Tri-Cities Community Garden Project. Educators provided short courses to teach participants how to grow their own fruits and vegetables to improve nutrition, physical health and mental well-being. About **150 residents** took the course, which is great inaugural program participation.



## » INFORMATION SYSTEMS SERVICES

Palm Beach County is making significant strides in closing the digital divide, thanks to the dedication of the Information Systems Services (ISS) Department. Over the past fiscal year, the county installed **380 broadband poles** with solar panels and radios across six municipalities, laid **56 miles of fiber optic cable**, and expanded broadband access to more schools and libraries.



Currently, broadband is available at **234 county facilities**, including libraries, parks, courthouses, the Convention Center, and Palm Beach International Airport. To extend connectivity even further, **ISS Network Services is collaborating with municipalities to bring Wi-Fi to more than 150 additional city-owned facilities and parks**. A key partnership with the School District of Palm Beach County is also helping to provide Wi-Fi for students in need, **covering 450 square miles and connecting 146 schools to the county's private fiber network**.

Beyond public spaces and schools, the county is working with the Palm Beach County Housing Authority to explore internet access solutions for residents in its properties. These efforts are part of a larger strategy to improve digital connectivity, enhance public services and support economic development in underserved areas to ensure all residents have access to the opportunities of a connected world.

## YOUTH SERVICES

Youth Services Department (YSD) and the Family Counseling Division held their first Mental Health Family Day in honor of May's Mental Health Awareness Month. Families across the county participated in workshops to strengthen family relationships and foster a safe environment for healthy communication. The department collectively provided **approximately 120,000 therapeutic service hours**, throughout the fiscal year.

Thousands of children who otherwise would not be able to attend summer camps while school is out in the summer had the opportunity to experience all the great things camp can offer. Funding from the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County and the Board of County Commissioners allowed YSD's Outreach and Community Programming Division to **award 5,252 summer camp scholarships** to children in FY 2023/2024. This is an **increase of nearly 15%** compared to the previous summer when **4,582 scholarships were awarded**.



*A new initiative, Mental Health Resources LinkTree, connects residents to mental health services and information throughout the county.*

## COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

The Office of Community Revitalization (OCR) plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life for Palm Beach County residents by addressing essential community needs and fostering partnerships that drive long-term positive change. Beyond infrastructure projects like streetlights and pedestrian safety enhancements, as well as food distribution initiatives, OCR is widely recognized for its Back to School PBC event, one of its largest and most impactful annual efforts.



At the record-breaking 2024 event, **12,000** students registered to receive essential school supplies at sites across the county in collaboration with the School District Communications and Engagement Department, ensuring they start the academic year prepared for success. By alleviating the financial burden on families, OCR helps parents across Palm Beach County navigate the rising costs of a school year.

Beyond education, the OCR champions community well-being by supporting young women through empowerment initiatives, strengthening community partnerships and promoting health and wellness. These targeted efforts address immediate concerns while reinforcing the power of collective action to create lasting stability and resilience in Palm Beach County.



## LIBRARY SYSTEM

Palm Beach County Library System is more than books, classes and videos. Local branches also worked to provide **40,257** summer lunches, snacks, weekend meal service and afterschool snacks. Our Library system is more than books on the shelf. In Fiscal Year 2024, over **8.5 MILLION** items, including digital items, were checked out using a free library card. Activity attendance topped over **212,000** children, teens and adults. If checking out a book for your European vacation coincides with getting your passport for the first time, the library offers first-time passport application assistance.



# THANK YOU TO OUR TEAMPBC VOLUNTEERS

## TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS AND COST SAVINGS

**123,116 HRS**  
**\$4,123,155**

PARKS &  
RECREATION

**42,264 HRS**  
**\$1,415,421**

LIBRARIES

**758 HRS**  
**\$25,385**

VICTIM SERVICES

**726 HRS**  
**\$24,314**

EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT

**5,143 HRS**  
**\$172,239**

CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
COMMISSION

**15,359 HRS**  
**\$514,373**

ANIMAL CARE &  
CONTROL

**23,880 HRS**  
**\$799,741**

COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION

**864 HRS**  
**\$28,935**

YOUTH  
SERVICES

**2,361 HRS**  
**\$79,070**

ENVIRONMENTAL  
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

**14,837 HRS**  
**\$496,891**

COMMUNITY SERVICES

**20,251 HRS**  
**\$678,206**

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY  
REVITALIZATION

**249,559 HRS**

TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS  
IN PALM BEACH COUNTY

**\$8.3 MILLION**

TOTAL COST SAVINGS  
TO PALM BEACH COUNTY



# CELEBRATING TEAMPBC

## YEARS OF SERVICE & DEDICATION

*From maintaining parks to paving roads, TeamPBC ensures a great quality of life.*

Palm Beach County employees work together daily to make this a superior place to live, work and play. From maintaining parks to paving roads to providing essential services, their efforts influence every corner of the community. The **7,100 positions within Palm Beach County government ensure the people here receive the services and programs necessary for a good quality of life.**

More than half of the county's positions have employees with less than nine years of service. They join a strong foundation of experienced professionals. Together, these teams ensure the county remains a well-run, forward-thinking community by having fresh ideas, invaluable knowledge and consistency.

Every employee contributes to Palm Beach County's success. Whether their work is highly visible or behind the scenes, their dedication strengthens the community we proudly call home. Thank you for all you do to support and improve our county.



### 50+ YEARS

Nancy King  
Planning, Zoning and Building

40-49 years = **24** Employees

30-39 years = **230** Employees

20-29 years = **1,055** Employees

10-19 years = **1,601** Employees













# PALM BEACH COUNTY

## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Once again, Palm Beach International Airport (PBI) has ranked among the top ten domestic airports in the United States. Travel + Leisure named PBI the third-best airport in the nation.

Palm Beach County was recognized as the United Way 2023 Campaign's Top Fundraiser for Government in Florida. The employee-funded campaign raised nearly \$970,000.

Palm Beach County's Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program has received the 2024 Award for Measurable Improvements in HIV Care from the Centers of Quality Improvement and Innovation, including:

- providing healthcare for individuals diagnosed with HIV
- implementing the Tele-Adherence Counseling Program (TAC)
- supporting clients with the use of the Positive Links (PL) Cares app which offers medication reminders, lab results, mood check-ins, and a community message board.

The Engineering and Public Works Department received the Employer of the Year Award from the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Palm Beach Branch.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) awarded Palm Beach County with 22 NACo Achievement Awards for 2024.

Palm Beach County achieved an impressive #8 ranking in the 2024 Digital Counties Survey. The Digital Counties Survey, conducted annually by the Center for Digital Government and NACo, evaluates technology use in U.S. county governments and identifies best practices, recognizes innovation, and anticipates future trends.

Palm Beach County received the 2024 Platinum Bell Seal for Workplace Mental Health by Mental Health America, the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting mental health and well-being nationwide.

Palm Beach County Water Utilities drinking water provided to the unincorporated areas has met and exceeded state and federal standards, with zero water quality violations.

Palm Beach County Victim Services received the FBI Director's Community Leadership Award. This award honors dedicated individuals and organizations nationwide for their extraordinary contributions to strengthening communities and reducing crime and violence.



**TRAVEL+  
LEISURE**



**CENTER FOR QUALITY  
IMPROVEMENT & INNOVATION**





Palm Beach County  
Board of County Commissioners

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