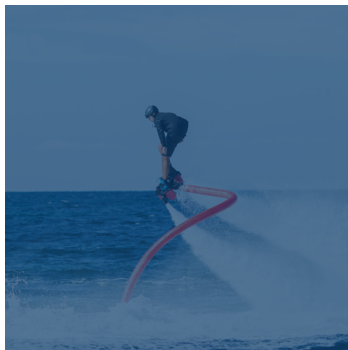
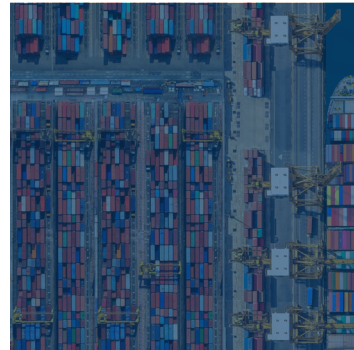
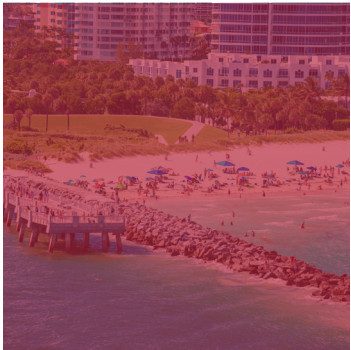
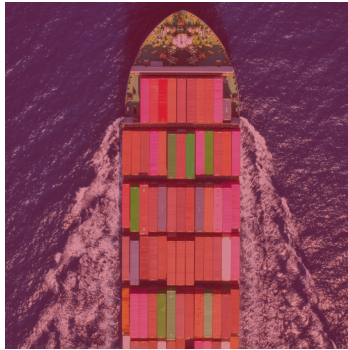
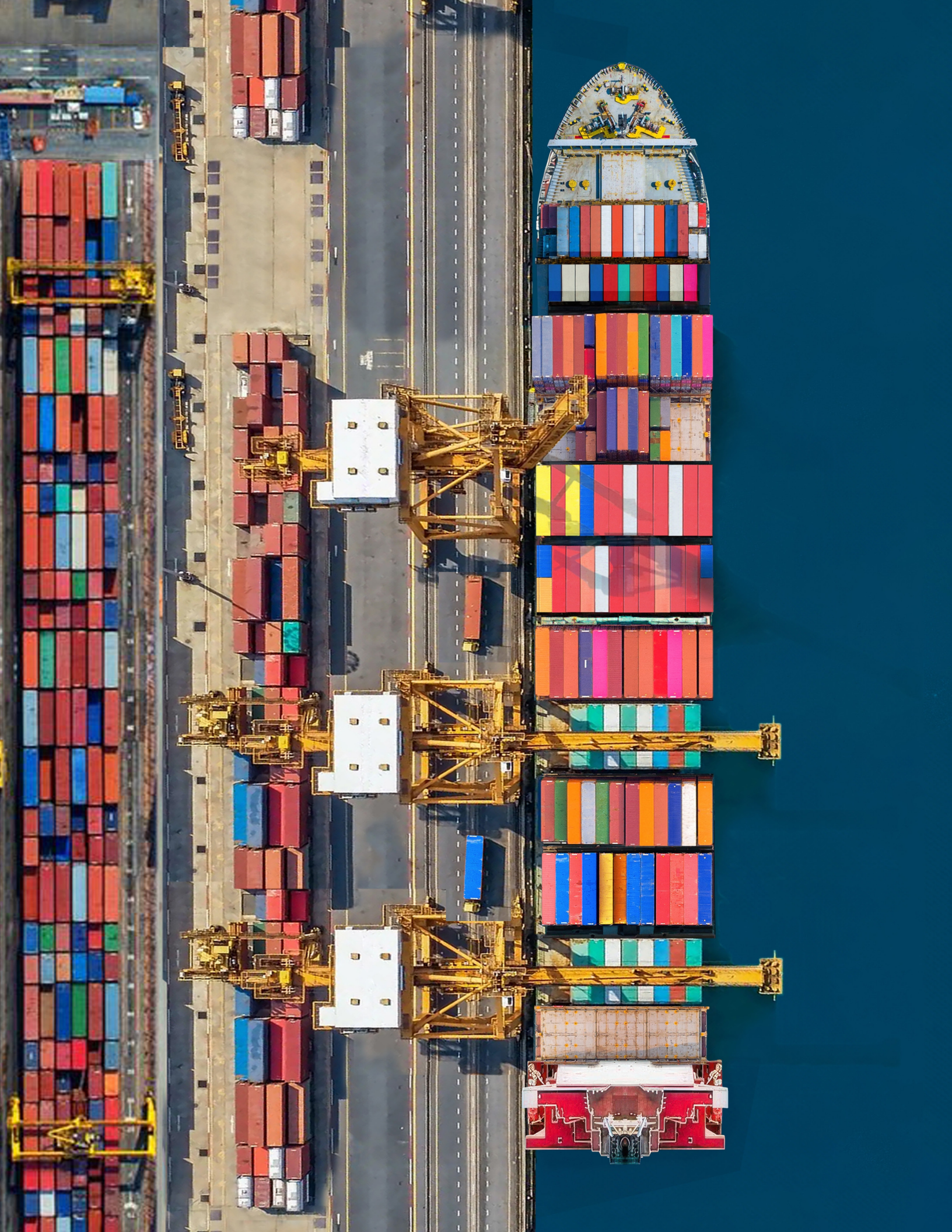


2026 ANNUAL REPORT



EDITION 2
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Florida Office of
OCEAN ECONOMY
at Florida Atlantic University



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Florida's Ocean Economy is a major driver of the state's prosperity, supporting jobs, businesses, innovation, tourism, transportation, national defense, and coastal communities.

Together, this footprint accounted for roughly ~4.7% of Florida's Gross State Product in 2024 and supported economic output across every region of the state.

The largest Ocean Economy sectors were Tourism and Recreation, Marine Transportation and Warehousing, and National Defense and Public Administration, which together accounted for most jobs and economic output. Since 2018, the Ocean Economy has demonstrated strong growth, with value added increasing by 44%, labor income increasing by 31%, and employment increasing by 15%. Marine Transportation and Warehousing emerged as the fastest-growing sector, reflecting Florida's expanding role in global trade and logistics.

Established by the Florida Legislature in 2024 and housed at Florida Atlantic University, the Florida Office of Ocean Economy serves as a statewide connector across business, research, workforce development, capital, and policy. During 2026, the Office transitioned from planning to implementation, launching programs and partnerships designed to strengthen the systems that support long-term economic growth.

Key accomplishments included launching the Ocean Economy Dashboard, Ocean Economy Policy & Applied Research Lab (OPAL), Comprehensive Ocean Research Asset Library (CORAL) Network, Florida Oceans Talent Marketplace, and the Ocean Economy Foundations micro-credential. The Office also launched a statewide Entrepreneurship Training Program to support early-stage companies and improve pathways from innovation to investment. These initiatives improve access to data, strengthen workforce alignment, connect research assets, support entrepreneurship, and enhance decision-making across the Ocean Economy.

Looking ahead, the Office will focus on expanding workforce development, strengthening research and innovation networks, improving economic intelligence, advancing applied policy research, and supporting commercialization and investment opportunities. Through continued collaboration with industry, academia, workforce organizations, and government partners, the Office is working to build a more connected, competitive, and resilient Ocean Economy that delivers opportunity and prosperity for all Floridians.

VALUE ADDED (GSP)

\$84.65B

TOTAL JOBS SUPPORTED

667,164

LABOR INCOME

\$45.89B

TOTAL TAX REVENUE

\$16.15B

SHARE OF FLORIDA GSP

~4.7%

A NOTE FROM *The Office of Ocean Economy*



In 2025, the Office established a strong foundation. We introduced the definition of Florida's Ocean Economy, quantified its economic significance, identified opportunities for growth, and outlined a vision for how the state could better connect its ocean and coastal resources to economic development. In 2026, we began turning that vision into action.

Created by the Florida Legislature and housed at Florida Atlantic University, the Florida Office of Ocean Economy serves as a statewide connector across business, research, workforce, capital, and policy. Over the past year, we launched new programs, strengthened partnerships, and developed tools designed to support long-term economic growth across Florida's Ocean Economy. From the Ocean Economy Foundations micro-credential and the Florida Oceans Talent Marketplace, Stakeholder & Asset Mapping & Geospatial App, Comprehensive Ocean Research Asset Library (CORAL) Network, and Ocean Economy Policy & Applied Research Lab (OPAL), our focus has been on building the systems that help people, ideas, and opportunities move more effectively across the state.

This work reflects a core belief: Florida's future competitiveness depends not only on the strength of its industries but on the strength of the connections between them. By improving access to information, aligning workforce pathways with industry demand, supporting entrepreneurs, and advancing applied research, the Office is helping create the conditions necessary for innovation, investment, and job growth.

Florida Atlantic University (FAU) remains a critical partner in this effort. As the home of the Office, FAU provides a unique platform to connect academic research with real-world economic opportunity. The University's commitment to innovation, workforce development, and community engagement aligns closely with the Office's mission, while its statewide and global partnerships help elevate Florida's position as a leader in the Ocean Economy.

The accomplishments highlighted throughout this report demonstrate what can be achieved through collaboration, strategic focus, and efficient use of resources. While much work remains ahead, 2026 marks an important step forward in establishing the infrastructure, partnerships, and knowledge systems needed to support a resilient, innovative, and globally competitive Ocean Economy.

We are grateful to the many businesses, researchers, educators, workforce partners, policymakers, and community leaders who contributed their time, expertise, and ideas throughout the year. Together, we are building an Ocean Economy that creates opportunity, strengthens communities, and supports long-term prosperity for all Floridians.



OUR IMPACT, IN BRIEF

5 major platforms built or launched — Ocean Economy Dashboard, OPAL, CORAL Network, Florida Oceans Talent Marketplace, and the Ocean Economy Foundations micro-credential

68,000+ Ocean Economy assets mapped statewide across 7 stakeholder clusters

1.8M strong workforce across 798 occupations in Florida's talent pool analyzed in the Office's first comprehensive workforce study from which the Ocean Economy could draw trained workers.

900+ academic and workforce training programs cataloged, with 397 aligned to priority high-wage occupations

40+ statewide engagements — listening sessions, conferences, and partner meetings across every region of Florida

8 collegiate startups launching in the first cohort of the Entrepreneurship Training Program

3,000 registered users projected for the Florida Oceans Talent Marketplace pilot, connecting job seekers to 50 high-wage, high-demand career pathways

Unfortunately, the Florida Legislature did not fund the Office for the 2026–2027 fiscal year. Florida Atlantic University has invested to sustain the Office's core work at a reduced scale during this period, and the Office remains committed to demonstrating its value and continuing to make the case to the Legislature for prioritizing Florida's Ocean Economy going forward.

ABOUT

The Office of Ocean Economy

Established by the Florida Legislature in 2024, the Florida Office of Ocean Economy (“the Office”) was created to strengthen the state’s position as a global leader in ocean-related industries. Housed at Florida Atlantic University, the Office was statutorily charged with advancing economic development through the stewardship and resilient use of Florida’s ocean and coastal resources.

Recognizing the importance of ocean-related sectors to the state’s long-term prosperity, the Legislature directed the Office to lead efforts in workforce alignment, innovation acceleration, data coordination, and statewide strategy development. In 2026, the Office moved from foundation to implementation, advancing a coordinated set of programs that connect Florida’s industries, workforce, research institutions, and policymakers.

The Office serves as a centralized hub to strengthen and grow the state’s Ocean Economy. While the Office does not directly generate economic activity, it builds the systems that make growth possible, improving coordination, reducing fragmentation, and aligning efforts across business, research, workforce, capital, and policy. By bringing together stakeholders and improving access to information and resources, the Office helps accelerate innovation, support workforce development, inform public policy, and enable long-term economic growth.

In its second year, the Office focused on developing the infrastructure needed to support a more connected Ocean Economy. This included advancing workforce intelligence, strengthening research networks, improving access to economic data, supporting entrepreneurship, and fostering collaboration among public, private, and academic partners. Together, these efforts help ensure that Florida’s ocean and coastal assets continue to generate opportunity, competitiveness, and prosperity for communities across the state.

Our Mission: To connect the state’s ocean and coastal resources to economic development strategies that grow, enhance, or contribute to the Ocean Economy.

Our Vision: An Ocean Economy that delivers opportunity, security, and prosperity for **every Floridian**.

OUR CORE FOCUS

A quality job is more than just a living wage. It provides benefits, a safe and stable working environment, and opportunities for advancement, all of which supports both individual economic mobility and broader workforce resilience.

The Florida Office of Ocean Economy works to expand access to these opportunities by strengthening the systems that connect Floridians to careers, businesses, research, and investment across the Ocean Economy.

We focus our efforts across five core areas that guide our strategy, investments, and partnerships to unlock the full potential of Florida's Ocean Economy, now and for generations to come.



BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The **engine** behind Florida's Ocean Economy. We support and grow ocean-focused enterprises, from traditional marine industries and tourism to ocean tech startups, powering job creation, innovation, and long-term economic resilience.



RESEARCH, INNOVATION, AND IMPACT

The **propeller** of discovery, advancement, and security. We power scientific discovery, innovation, and commercialization that advance resilience, strengthen national defense, boost coastal resilience, and position Florida as a global leader in the Ocean Economy.



TALENT, TRAINING, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The **crew** that keeps Florida's Ocean Economy moving. We prepare, attract, and retain the current and next generations through targeted strategies, training, and education to support quality jobs across every sector of the Ocean Economy.



POLICIES FOR FLORIDA'S FUTURE

The **compass** guiding long-term strategy. We shape forward-thinking policies that align ocean industry growth with environmental stewardship, community resilience, and Florida's global competitiveness, working alongside local governments, industry leaders, and research institutions to ensure coordinated and effective action across the state.



INVESTMENT AND ACCESS TO CAPITAL

The **fuel** that drives Florida's Ocean Economy forward. We expand access to funding, financing, and strategic investment across the Ocean Economy. From early-stage ventures to large-scale infrastructure, we help unlock the capital needed to grow resilient industries, modernize coastal assets, and attract long-term private and public investment.





THE STATE OF FLORIDA'S OCEAN ECONOMY

THE STATE OF FLORIDA'S OCEAN ECONOMY IS STRONG:
NEARLY 5% OF OUR STATE'S ECONOMIC OUTPUT, GROWING
FASTER THAN THE ECONOMY AS A WHOLE — WITH
OPPORTUNITY STILL AHEAD.

FLORIDA'S 2024 OCEAN ECONOMY AT A GLANCE

Why 2024? The economic estimates in this report are based on 2024 data, the most recent year for which complete industry, employment, and IMPLAN input-output data are available. As with most economic contribution analyses, there is an inherent lag between the reporting year and the underlying data.

Terms Used In This Section

Direct jobs are positions located in the ocean-facing industries themselves; total jobs add indirect jobs in the supply chains those industries buy from and induced jobs supported when workers in both spend their earnings, so total jobs are the jobs supported by ocean-related demand, not only the jobs inside ocean industries.

Total jobs (the IMPLAN employment count) is an annual-average headcount of every job, including part-time and seasonal positions, and the self-employed; wage-and-salary employees are the payroll subset and exclude proprietors.

Proprietors are self-employed workers and business owners who earn proprietor income rather than a wage or salary, counted in total jobs but not in wage-and-salary employment, which is the main reason the two counts differ.

Real value added is a sector's contribution to Gross State Product (output minus the cost of goods and services it buys from other industries), stated in constant 2026 dollars so changes reflect real growth rather than price inflation.

The **Hi/Lo ratio** compares the average pay of the highest-paying sector to that of the lowest-paying sector (2.87 means the top sector pays 2.87 times the bottom), and wage compression is a narrowing of that gap over time, as when the ratio fell from 3.09 in 2018 to 2.87 in 2024.

In 2024, Florida's Ocean Economy supported 667,164 jobs (direct, indirect, and induced, including proprietors). On a comparable wage-and-salary basis, the Ocean Economy's 530,519 payroll jobs are equivalent to about 5.3% of Florida's roughly 10 million nonfarm payroll jobs. This wage-and-salary basis is used so the two counts are defined the same way: the statewide figure of roughly 10 million counts nonfarm payroll jobs and excludes proprietors and the self-employed, so the Ocean Economy is measured on that same payroll basis for the comparison. Because total jobs include proprietors and the indirect and induced effects that occur in other industries already counted in the statewide total, the 667,164 figure is best read as employment supported by ocean-related demand rather than as a share of the statewide job base.

Gross State Product (GSP) Contribution

In 2024, Florida's Ocean Economy supported \$84.65 billion in value added across direct, indirect, and induced contributions. This represents roughly 4.7% of Florida's 2024 Gross State Product (GSP), which was approximately \$1.79 trillion. Ocean Economy also supported \$145.19 billion in industry output (sales revenues) statewide.



Marine Living Resources



Marine Transportation



Marine Industries



Marine Construction,
Utilities, and Minerals



Marine Research and
Education



Tourism and Recreation



National Defense and
Public Administration

This report reflects substantial methodological revisions since the Oceans of Opportunity report (July 2025). Developed in collaboration with economists at the South Florida Regional Planning Council and University of Florida, the updated approach reduces double counting in indirect effects (such as supply chain linkages) and applies more conservative criteria for defining Ocean Economy sectors and attributing economic activity to ocean-dependent uses.

As a result, reported estimates of employment, labor income, and Gross State Product are lower but more precise and defensible. To enable consistent trend analysis, the Office also applied the updated methodology retroactively to prior years, so that year-over-year comparisons in this report reflect a single, consistent approach rather than a mix of methodologies. Given the complexity of the Ocean Economy, the methodology will continue to evolve. Comprehensive updates to the estimates are expected on a triennial or less frequent basis.

Major Sectors and Contributions to GSP, Employment, and Aggregate Wages

The 2025 Annual Report organized the Ocean Economy into six sectors. For the 2026 Annual Report, the framework was refined to include seven sectors, separating ocean-related military payroll and government administration into its own category.

These seven sectors are defined primarily along industry lines, using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), which groups establishments by similarity in their production processes. Industries were included where they depend directly on the ocean as a resource, input, operating environment, or location. Two sectors are handled differently: Marine Research and Education is defined to capture ocean-oriented academic and research work, and Tourism and Recreation is defined on a demand basis rather than a strict production basis. Each sector reflects the direct ocean-facing employment, wages, and value added of the industries it covers.

Supporting industries such as professional, scientific, technical, administrative, financial, insurance, legal, real estate, accounting, information technology, wholesale, and other business services are not treated as separate major Ocean Economy sectors unless they are directly ocean-facing. Instead, supporting industries generally appear as indirect contributions included in each of the seven major sectors. This approach avoids double counting, preserves the distinction between each sector's direct ocean-facing operations and its supply-chain and consumer-spending contributions, and allows each sector's total contribution to reflect both its direct contributions and the broader economic operations that it supports.



DEFINITION AND OVERVIEW OF MAJOR SECTORS

MARINE LIVING RESOURCES

FISHING, AQUACULTURE, AND SEAFOOD SUPPLY CHAINS

AT A GLANCE

TOTAL JOBS
18,836

VALUE ADDED (2026\$)
\$2.25B

Average Compensation
\$88,000

W&S Jobs
11,787

Emp. Compensation
\$1.04B

FAST FACT:
U.S. COMMERCIAL
FISHING AND SEAFOOD
INDUSTRY GENERATED
\$173 BILLION IN SALES
IN 2023

This sector includes commercial fishing, aquaculture, seafood processing, and distribution, from wholesalers to retail markets. It supports food production, local economies, and global seafood markets, and relies on healthy marine ecosystems and resilient management practices.

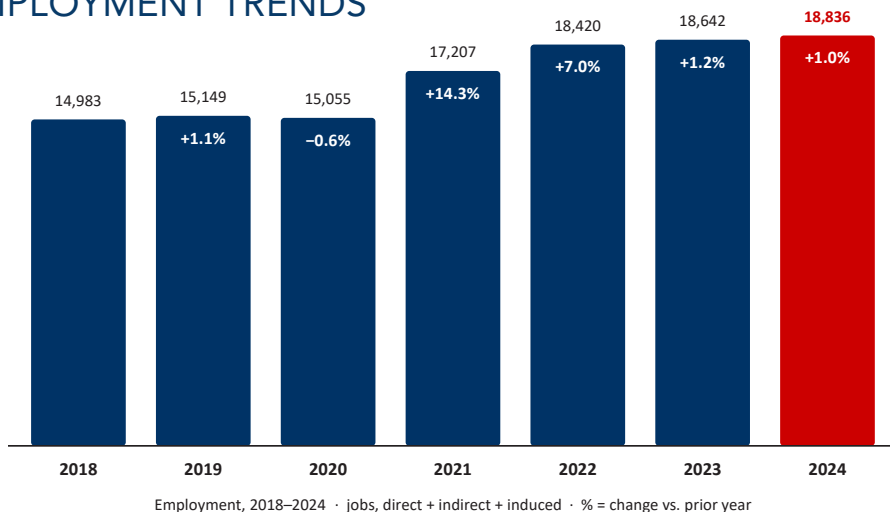
EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION, AND VALUE ADDED

Contributions	Jobs	W&S Jobs	Employee Comp (2026\$)	Average Compensation	Value Added (2026\$)
Direct	11,355	7,294	\$586M	\$80K	\$1,358M
Indirect	4,671	2,683	\$278M	\$104K	\$488M
Induced	2,809	1,810	\$174M	\$96K	\$403M
Total	18,836	11,787	\$1.04B	\$88K	\$2.25B

Employee comp & value added rounded to nearest million · avg compensation rounded to nearest thousand

**See chart explanation on following page*

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS



NOAA's Fisheries Economics of the United States (2023 data, most recent) reports that the U.S. commercial fishing and seafood industry generated \$173 billion in sales and supported 1.4 million jobs nationally (NOAA Fisheries, 2023). No published Florida-specific outlook through 2028 was identified; given the cyclicity of seafood demand and ongoing stock-management constraints (Gulf annual catch limits), a flat-to-modest growth scenario is reasonable for wild-capture fishing. Within this sector, the clearer growth potential lies in aquaculture and in downstream seafood processing, wholesale, and retail distribution rather than in wild harvest, which is constrained by catch limits. UF/IFAS reports that Florida aquaculture generates more than \$165 million in sales annually, led by farmed hard clams and by ornamental (tropical) fish, for which Florida is the leading U.S. producer (UF/IFAS, 2025).

MARINE TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING SHIPPING, LOGISTICS, AND PASSENGER TRAVEL

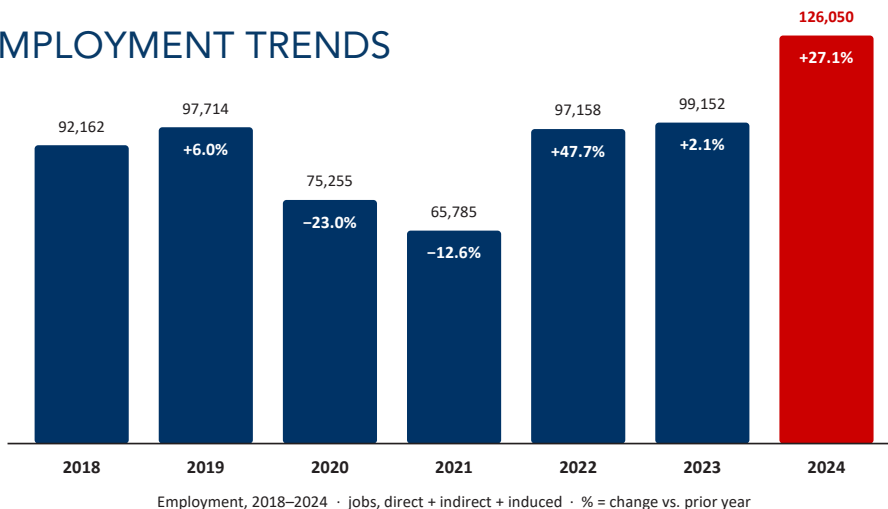
This sector covers ocean freight transportation, passenger vessels, sightseeing operations, and the supporting logistics systems that move goods and people. Supporting logistics systems, warehousing, and storage services are counted as indirect contributions rather than as separate direct contributions, unless they are independently classified as ocean-facing transportation work.

EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION, AND VALUE ADDED

Contributions	Jobs	W&S Jobs	Employee Comp (2026\$)	Average Compensation	Value Added (2026\$)
Direct	42,531	36,549	\$4,498M	\$123K	\$9,571M
Indirect	56,722	35,665	\$3,776M	\$106K	\$6,515M
Induced	26,797	17,271	\$1,662M	\$96K	\$3,845M
Total	126,050	89,485	\$9.94B	\$111K	\$19.93B

Employee comp & value added rounded to nearest million · avg compensation rounded to nearest thousand

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS



Florida's 16 public seaports handled 131 million tons of cargo in 2024 (Florida News Update, 2024) and have identified more than \$5 billion in capital improvement plans through fiscal year 2028, covering dock rehabilitation, container handling capacity, and intermodal connectivity. Florida's broader freight and logistics market is forecast to grow from approximately \$78.32 billion in 2025 to \$97.10 billion by 2030 (4.39% CAGR) (Mordor Intelligence, 2025). Port Everglades broke its own containerized cargo record in FY 2025 (1,167,552 TEUs) (Port Everglades, 2025), and Port Tampa Bay reported double-digit growth in its container business, reaching nearly 119,235 TEUs in FY 2024 (Port Tampa Bay, 2025).

How to Read the Employment, Compensation, and Value Added Tables*

Direct is the ocean-facing industries themselves, Indirect is their supply-chain purchases, and Induced is household spending by the workers those channels support; the Total row sums the three and is the figure cited in the text. Jobs and W&S jobs are annual-average headcounts, not full-time equivalents; W&S jobs count only payroll positions and exclude proprietors; Average compensation is employee compensation (wages plus employer-paid benefits) per W&S job. The Total for Average compensation reflects a weighted average, not the sum.

AT A GLANCE

TOTAL JOBS

126,050

VALUE ADDED (2026\$)

\$19.93B

Average Compensation

\$111,000

W&S Jobs

89,485

Emp. Compensation

\$9.94B

**SHIPPING
BOOM:
PORT EVERGLADES
BROKE ITS OWN
CONTAINERIZED
CARGO RECORD IN FY
2025 (1,167,552 TEUS)
(PORT EVERGLADES,
2025), AND PORT
TAMPA BAY REPORTED
DOUBLE-DIGIT
GROWTH IN ITS
CONTAINER BUSINESS**

MARINE INDUSTRIES AND SHIPBUILDING

VESSELS, EQUIPMENT, AND MARINE TECHNOLOGY

AT A GLANCE

TOTAL JOBS
32,548

VALUE ADDED (2026\$)
\$4.21B

Average Compensation
\$94,000

W&S Jobs
26,103

Emp. Compensation
\$2.45B

BUILT IN FLORIDA:
FLORIDA HOLDS A DISPROPORTIONATELY LARGE SHARE OF U.S. BOAT MANUFACTURING, AN INDUSTRY THAT SOLD AN ESTIMATED 215,000–225,000 NEW POWERBOATS NATIONWIDE IN 2025.

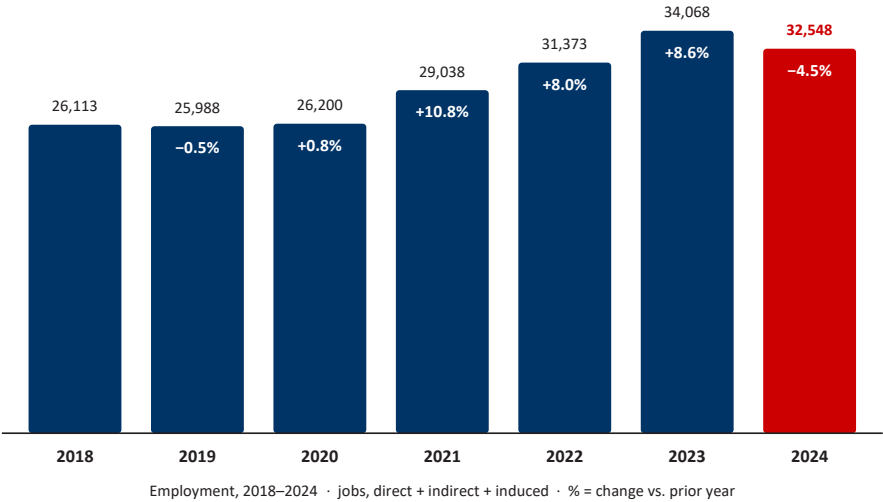
This sector includes shipbuilding, boat manufacturing, vessel repair, and production of marine navigation systems and marine equipment. It supports both traditional maritime industries and emerging marine technologies.

EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION, AND VALUE ADDED

Contributions	Jobs	W&S Jobs	Employee Comp (2026\$)	Average Compensation	Value Added (2026\$)
Direct	15,389	15,026	\$1,304M	\$87K	\$1,894M
Indirect	10,852	7,011	\$757M	\$108K	\$1,414M
Induced	6,307	4,066	\$391M	\$96K	\$905M
Total	32,548	26,103	\$2.45B	\$94K	\$4.21B

Employee comp & value added rounded to nearest million · avg compensation rounded to nearest thousand

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS



The National Marine Manufacturers Association estimates 2025 U.S. new powerboat unit sales declined 8–10% to 215,000–225,000 units, with 2026 expected to be flat to slightly higher than 2025 (NMMA, 2025). This is a national figure; Florida’s share of U.S. boat manufacturing is disproportionately large, so Florida boat-builder revenues are likely to track this national trajectory closely.

MARINE CONSTRUCTION, UTILITIES, AND MINERALS INFRASTRUCTURE AND COASTAL DEVELOPMENT

This sector includes construction of ports, dredging, shoreline stabilization, and other marine infrastructure together with coastal fossil-fuel and nuclear power generation that draws on ocean or coastal water for cooling. It supports coastal resilience, development, and energy systems.

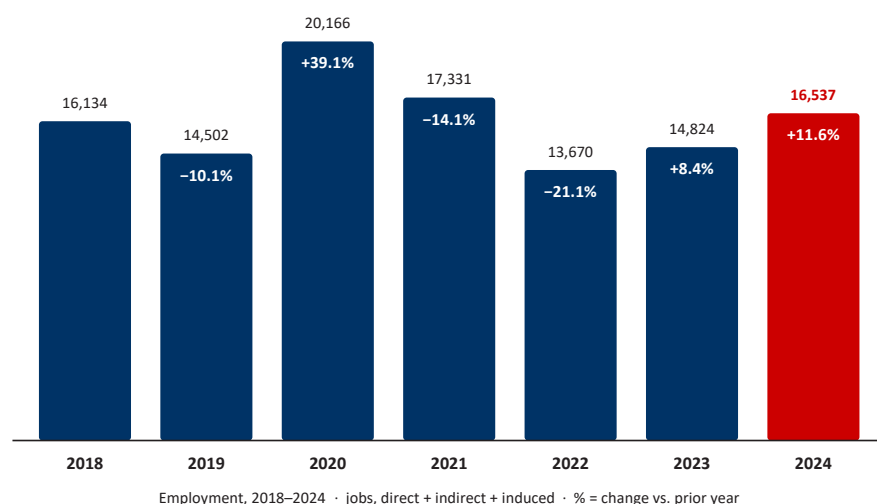
The utilities component covers only thermoelectric (fossil-fuel and nuclear) generation that uses ocean or coastal water for cooling. It excludes offshore wind and tidal generation, which do not operate in Florida, and hydroelectric generation, which is inland and freshwater-fed. Sand and gravel mining and offshore oil and gas extraction are also excluded: offshore operations could not be separated from inland operations in the available data, and there is no offshore drilling in Florida.

EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION, AND VALUE ADDED

Contributions	Jobs	W&S Jobs	Employee Comp (2026\$)	Average Compensation	Value Added (2026\$)
Direct	6,827	5,061	\$727M	\$144K	\$3,838M
Indirect	5,027	2,916	\$342M	\$117K	\$824M
Induced	4,684	3,015	\$290M	\$96K	\$671M
Total	16,537	10,992	\$1.36B	\$124K	\$5.33B

Employee comp & value added rounded to nearest million · avg compensation rounded to nearest thousand

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS



The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's 2026–2027 Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan drives ongoing investment in seawalls, elevated roads, dredging, and coastal flood mitigation (Florida DEP, 2026). Industry observers list water, wastewater, coastal protection, and resilience projects among the top construction themes for 2026. Combined with the ~\$5B port capital investment cited on page 11, this points to a sustained pipeline of marine-construction work through 2028.

AT A GLANCE

TOTAL JOBS
16,537

VALUE ADDED (2026\$)
\$5.33B

Average Compensation
\$124,000

W&S Jobs
10,992

Emp. Compensation
\$1.36B

**COASTAL
PIPELINE:**
FLORIDA'S PORTS
HAVE IDENTIFIED
MORE THAN \$5
BILLION IN CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENT PLANS
THROUGH FISCAL
YEAR 2028, POINTING
TO A SUSTAINED
PIPELINE OF MARINE
CONSTRUCTION
WORK.

MARINE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION SCIENCE, TRAINING, AND EXPERTISE

AT A GLANCE

TOTAL JOBS

861

VALUE ADDED (2026\$)

\$110M

Average Compensation

\$113,000

W&S Jobs

567

Emp. Compensation

\$64M

A FOCUS IN ACADEMIA:

THE OFFICE SURVEYED 39 ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND IDENTIFIED 3,289 MARINE RESEARCHERS THROUGHOUT FLORIDA IN 2024.

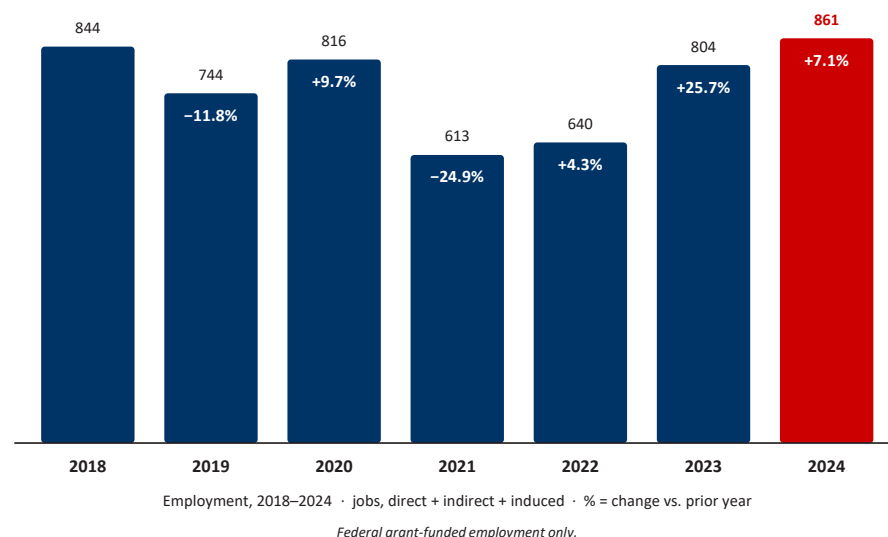
This sector reflects economic activity associated with federal research grants awarded to Florida educational institutions for ocean- and marine-related topics. It drives innovation, informs policy, supports technology development, and prepares the next generation of Ocean Economy professionals. Professional and business services that support this work are counted as indirect contributions rather than as separate direct activity unless they are independently classified as ocean-facing research or education work.

EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION, AND VALUE ADDED

Contributions	Jobs	W&S Jobs	Employee Comp (2026\$)	Average Compensation	Value Added (2026\$)
Direct	389	295	\$36M	\$121K	\$53M
Indirect	298	159	\$18M	\$111K	\$32M
Induced	174	112	\$11M	\$96K	\$25M
Total	861	567	\$64M	\$113K	\$110M

Employee comp & value added rounded to nearest million · avg compensation rounded to nearest thousand

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS



While the table above depicts the marine research jobs driven by ocean and marine federal grant research alone, the Office is aware that the number of active researchers in the marine research field far exceeds 861 total jobs in 2024. To better estimate the size of Florida's marine research workforce, the Office surveyed 39 academic departments and research institutes and identified 3,289 researchers throughout Florida in 2024. This number does not include researchers in private industry, which the Office does not currently have the capability to measure.

TOURISM AND RECREATION, COASTAL AND OFFSHORE TRAVEL, RECREATION, AND VISITOR EXPERIENCES

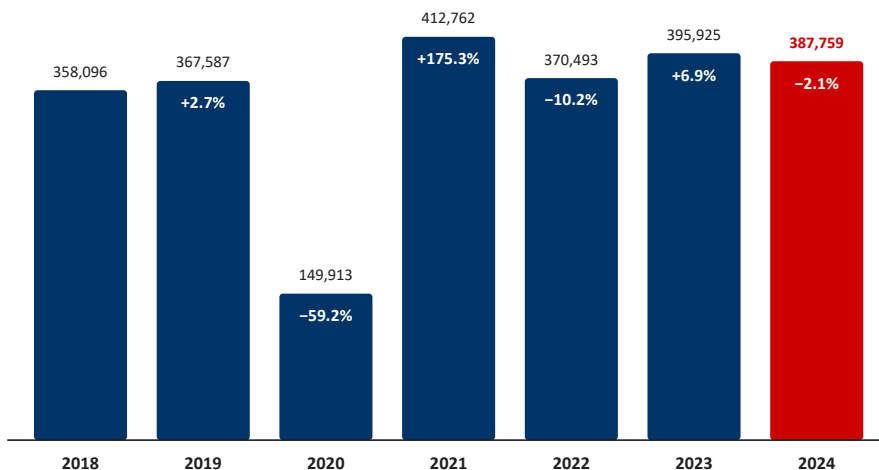
This sector is measured as spending by out-of-state leisure visitors on ocean- and beach-related recreation and recreational fishing, including associated lodging, dining, and recreational purchases. It is a major driver of Florida's economy, and depends on clean water, accessible coastlines, and high-quality visitor experiences. Boating, marinas, and coastal lodging are captured to the extent this spending falls within that visitor scope.

EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION, AND VALUE ADDED

Contributions	Jobs	W&S Jobs	Employee Comp (2026\$)	Average Compensation	Value Added (2026\$)
Direct	287,739	254,016	\$12,730M	\$50K	\$23,860M
Indirect	51,173	29,193	\$3,114M	\$107K	\$5,849M
Induced	48,847	31,488	\$3,030M	\$96K	\$7,010M
Total	387,759	314,697	\$18.87B	\$60K	\$36.72B

Employee comp & value added rounded to nearest million · avg compensation rounded to nearest thousand

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS



Employment, 2018–2024 · jobs, direct + indirect + induced · % = change vs. prior year

According to Visit Florida, Florida's tourism sector welcomed a record 143.3 million visitors in 2025 (Executive Office of the Governor, 2026), up from 142.9 million in 2024 (Executive Office of the Governor, 2025). Industry forecasts project continued visitor growth: 162.3 million (2026), and 173.2 million by 2028 (The Capitolist, 2025). While the forecasted jump seems high, the visitation estimates use different methodologies and therefore are not directly comparable. According to Tourism Analytics, Canadian visitation fell 15.1% year-over-year in Q3 2025; continued growth will depend in part on increased visitation from Latin American markets (Tourism Analytics, 2025).

AT A GLANCE

TOTAL JOBS
387,759

VALUE ADDED (2026\$)
\$36.72B

Average Compensation
\$60,000

W&S Jobs
314,697

Emp. Compensation
\$18.87B

RECORD VISITORS:
A RECORD 143.3
MILLION VISITORS
IN 2025, AND AN
ANTICIPATED 162.3
MILLION IN 2026

NATIONAL DEFENSE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SECURITY AND COASTAL GOVERNANCE

AT A GLANCE

TOTAL JOBS

84,573

VALUE ADDED (2026\$)

\$16.10B

Average Compensation

\$115,000

W&S Jobs

76,888

Emp. Compensation

\$8.84B

**DEFENSE IS
A DRIVER:
MORE THAN \$65
BILLION IN DIRECT
DEFENSE SPENDING
WAS INJECTED INTO
FLORIDA'S ECONOMY
IN 2022**

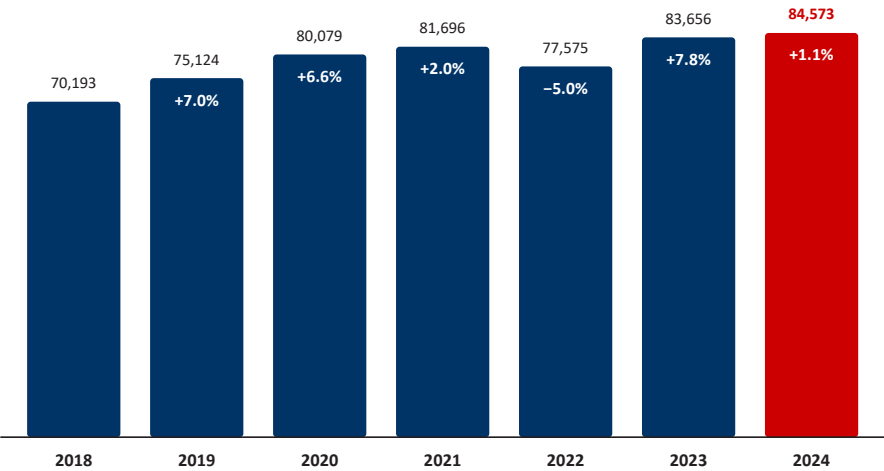
This sector includes federal, state, and local government administrative and payroll costs related to coastal management and national defense. This sector supports maritime security, infrastructure, and the policies that guide responsible ocean and coastal use. This sector does not include construction, which is included in the Marine Construction, Utilities and Minerals section. Because this sector reflects payroll only, there are no indirect effects; instead all downstream effects flow to household spending (induced contributions).

EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION, AND VALUE ADDED

Contributions	Jobs	W&S Jobs	Employee Comp (2026\$)	Average Compensation	Value Added (2026\$)
Direct	62,934	62,934	\$7,496M	\$119K	\$12,989M
Indirect	0	0	\$0M	0	\$0M
Induced	21,639	13,954	\$1,343M	\$96K	\$3,107M
Total	84,573	76,888	\$8.84B	\$115K	\$16.10B

Employee comp & value added rounded to nearest million · avg compensation rounded to nearest thousand

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS



Employment, 2018–2024 · jobs, direct + indirect + induced · % = change vs. prior year

Excludes construction activity, reported under Marine Construction, Utilities and Minerals.

According to the 2024 Florida Defense Industry Economic Impact Analysis prepared for the Florida Defense Support Task Force and FloridaCommerce, more than \$65 billion in direct defense spending was injected into Florida’s economy in 2022, a 21% increase over the 2020 level of nearly \$54 billion (FloridaCommerce, 2024).

The Defense Industry Economic Impact Analysis report identifies \$65.3 billion in defense-related expenditures, including federal procurement, personnel compensation, and transfer payments to veterans and military retirees. It attributes \$102.6 billion in GSP and 865,937 jobs statewide to this spending (FloridaCommerce, 2024).

OCEAN ECONOMY SUMMARY

Each Ocean Economy sector contributes a unique combination of jobs, wages, and value added. The table below summarizes 2024 direct and total employment, employee compensation (wages, salaries, benefits) and proprietor income, and Gross State Product contribution (Value Added) by sector under the revised seven-sector classification.

OCEAN ECONOMY SUMMARY BY SECTOR - 2024

Sector	Direct Emp.	Total Emp.	Labor Income	Value Added (GSP)
Marine Living Resources	11,355	18,836	\$1.16B	\$2.25B
Marine Transportation and Warehousing	42,531	126,050	\$10.96B	\$19.93B
Marine Industries and Shipbuilding	15,389	32,548	\$2.58B	\$4.21B
Marine Construction, Utilities and Minerals	6,827	16,537	\$1.92B	\$5.33B
Marine Research and Education	389	861	\$0.07B	\$0.11B
Tourism and Recreation (Coastal/Offshore)	287,739	387,759	\$20.22B	\$36.72B
National Defense and Public Admin (Marine)	62,934	84,573	\$8.97B	\$16.10B
All Sectors	427,164	667,164	\$45.89B	\$84.65B

Source: IMPLAN input-output model (2024 data year), in real 2026 dollars. Figures are from a multi-industry economic contribution analysis of 41 ocean-related industry sectors, developed with the South Florida Regional Planning Council and University of Florida, and show the direct, indirect, and induced contributions of ocean-related demand. See the Methodology Appendix for sector definitions, data sources, and caveats. Marine Research and Education reflects federal grant-funded activity only.

TOTAL JOBS SUPPORTED AND DIRECT JOBS SUPPORTED

TOTAL JOBS SUPPORTED (TOTAL CONTRIBUTION)

667,164

On a comparable payroll basis, the Ocean Economy's 530,519 wage-and-salary jobs equal about 5.3% of Florida's roughly 10 million nonfarm payroll jobs. The remaining 136,645 jobs are proprietor jobs.

DIRECT JOBS SUPPORTED (OCEAN ECONOMY SECTORS ONLY)

427,164

The remaining 240K jobs reflect indirect (supply-chain) and induced (consumer spending) effects modeled by IMPLAN.

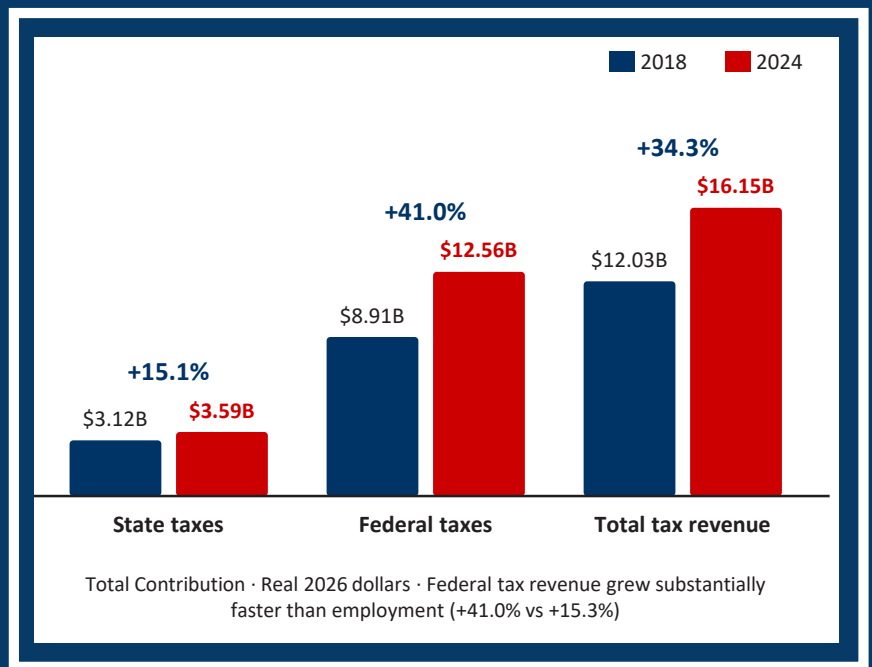
Total jobs supported (total impact): 667,164, counting direct jobs in ocean industries, the indirect and induced jobs they support in other industries, and self-employed proprietors. Because it includes ripple-effect jobs that also serve other industries and counts the self-employed, this total measures employment supported by the Ocean Economy statewide rather than a share of Florida's jobs. Measured the same way as the statewide benchmark, the Ocean Economy's 530,519 payroll jobs equal about 5.3% of Florida's roughly 10 million nonfarm payroll jobs.

LABOR INCOME

Total labor income across the Ocean Economy in 2024 was \$45.89 billion in real 2026 dollars, comprising employee compensation (wages and benefits paid to Wage and Salary workers) and proprietor income. The labor share of total industry output was 31.6% in 2024, down 1.5 percentage points from 33.1% in 2018, indicating that a larger share of growth has flowed to capital owners and indirect taxes over the period.

FEDERAL AND STATE TAX REVENUES GENERATED

The Ocean Economy supported an estimated \$16.15 billion in combined state and federal tax revenue in 2024, including \$3.59 billion in state taxes and \$12.56 billion in federal taxes. Federal tax revenue grew substantially faster than employment over 2018 to 2024 (+41.0% versus +15.3%), while state tax revenue grew at roughly the same pace as employment (+15.1% versus +15.3%).



TOP PERFORMING SECTORS

Ranked by 2024 contribution to Gross State Product (Value Added, Total Effect):

- 1. Tourism and Recreation (Coastal/Offshore)**
\$36.72 billion value added, 387,759 jobs. The single largest sector by every output measure.
- 2. Marine Transportation and Warehousing**
\$19.93 billion value added, 126,050 jobs. Anchored by port operations and water transportation; also the fastest-growing across every volume metric (jobs, labor income, value added, and tax revenue).
- 3. National Defense and Public Admin (Marine)**
\$16.10 billion value added, 84,573 jobs. Driven primarily by military installations and personnel.
- 4. Marine Construction, Utilities, and Minerals**
\$5.33 billion value added, 16,537 jobs. Dominated by ocean-facing construction.
- 5. Marine Industries and Shipbuilding**
\$4.21 billion value added, 32,548 jobs. Boat building accounts for roughly two-thirds of sector output.
- 6. Marine Living Resources**
\$2.25 billion value added, 18,836 jobs. Seafood wholesaling and processing dominate over commercial fishing in dollar terms.
- 7. Marine Research and Education**
\$0.11 billion value added, 861 jobs. Smallest by current scope but the highest-skill sector. These figures only include the contributions of federal research funding. Private, philanthropic, and other sources were unavailable.

+15.3%
TOTAL OCEAN ECONOMY
JOB GROWTH
(578,526 to 667,164)

+31.1%
REAL LABOR INCOME
GROWTH
(\$35.00B to \$45.89B)

GROWTH OUTLOOK & NOTABLE STATISTICS (2025–2028)

Tourism Recovery

+5.5% NEW JOBS
+18.3% REAL LABOR INCOME
+23.3% REAL VALUE ADDED

+44.0%
REAL VALUE ADDED GROWTH
(\$58.77B to \$84.65B)

+15.1%
REAL STATE AND LOCAL TAX
REVENUE GROWTH
(\$3.12B to \$3.59B)

+41.0%
REAL FEDERAL TAX REVENUE
GROWTH
(\$8.91B to \$12.56B)

**Marine
Transportation
& Warehousing**
FASTEST-GROWING SECTOR
ACROSS ALL METRICS

Hi/Lo Ratio Fell
CROSS-SECTOR WAGE
COMPRESSION
3.09x (2018) to 2.87x (2024)

Florida's employment outlook points to slower but continued labor-market expansion. The Florida Economic Estimating Conference's (FEEC) December 2025 long-run forecast projects non-farm employment rising from about 10.00 million jobs in FY2025 to 10.34 million in FY2028, with real Gross State Product growth moderating from 3.3% in FY2025 to 2.7% in FY2026, 2.6% in FY2027, and 2.2% in FY2028 (Florida Economic Estimating Conference, 2025). The unemployment rate is projected to rise from 4.1% in FY2026 to 4.5% in FY2027 and FY2028 before gradually easing.

A more conservative view comes from Florida TaxWatch, whose Q2 2025 forecast projects real GDP growth slowing to 1.6% in 2026 and 1.2% in 2027 (Florida TaxWatch, 2025), roughly a full percentage point below the FEEC path. The two forecasts use different base periods (FEEC reports on a fiscal-year basis, TaxWatch on a calendar-year basis) and different employment definitions, so their levels are not directly comparable. Taken together they bracket a plausible range: continued but decelerating growth under FEEC, and a sharper slowdown under TaxWatch.

FLORIDA'S OCEAN ECONOMY WORKFORCE

Beyond the wage analysis provided on the following page, there are two structural patterns that characterize the Ocean Economy workforce: the mix of wage-and-salary workers compared with self-employed proprietors, and the relationship between workforce growth, productivity, and wages.

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION: WAGE-EARNERS VS. SELF-EMPLOYED

Each Ocean Economy sector relies on a distinct mix of traditional wage and salary employees and self-employed proprietors. This distinction matters because workforce development funding, payroll tax treatment, and labor-protection rules affect these groups differently. The adjacent table shows the 2024 split for direct industry workers.

National Defense and Public Administration is essentially 100% wages and salaries of wage earners versus self-employed, reflecting the nature of government employment. Marine Living Resources has the highest proprietor share (35.8%), reflecting the prevalence of independent commercial fishermen and small seafood operations. Marine Industries and Shipbuilding is overwhelmingly wages and salaries (97.6%), a firm-employee model dominated by a small number of boat- and ship-building enterprises.

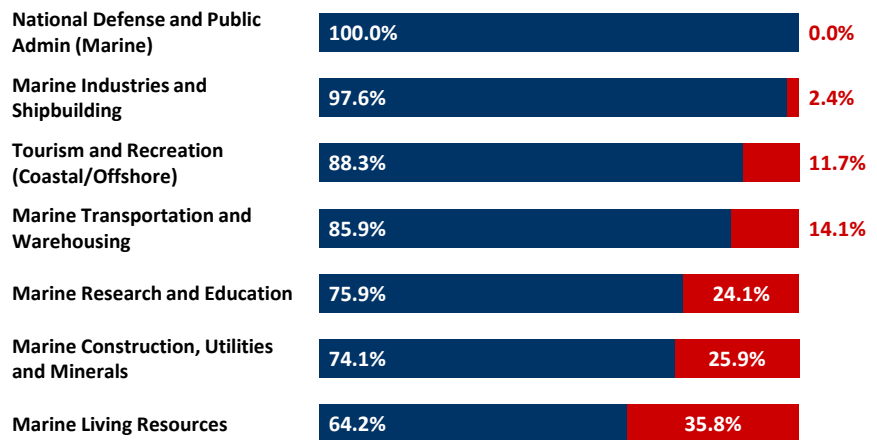
WORKFORCE GROWTH AND THE PRODUCTIVITY-WAGE GAP

From 2018–2024, Marine Transportation and Warehousing recorded the fastest direct wage and salary employment growth (+26.0%), while Marine Construction, Utilities, and Minerals employment was roughly flat against 2018. Flat headcount in this capital-intensive activity, particularly ocean dependent power generation, is consistent with sector and tax revenue per worker rising even where wage growth was modest (+6.2% real over the period).

Workforce Composition — W&S vs Proprietor

■ Wage & salary share

■ Proprietor (self-employed) share



2024 direct industry workers · Marine Living Resources has the highest proprietor share, reflecting independent commercial fishermen and small seafood operations

WAGES AND WORKFORCE TRENDS

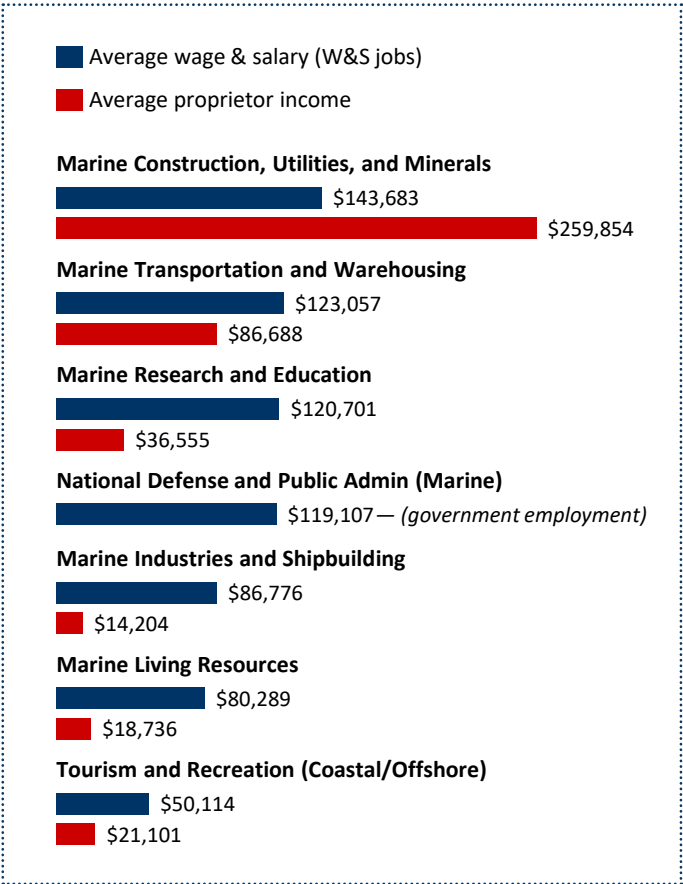
AVERAGE WAGES

(2024, Direct, Wage & Salary versus Average Proprietor Income)

Overall weighted average across the seven sectors: \$71,819.
Range: \$50,114 (Tourism) to \$143,683 (Marine Construction, Utilities and Minerals).

LOWEST-PAYING AND HIGHEST-PAYING SECTORS

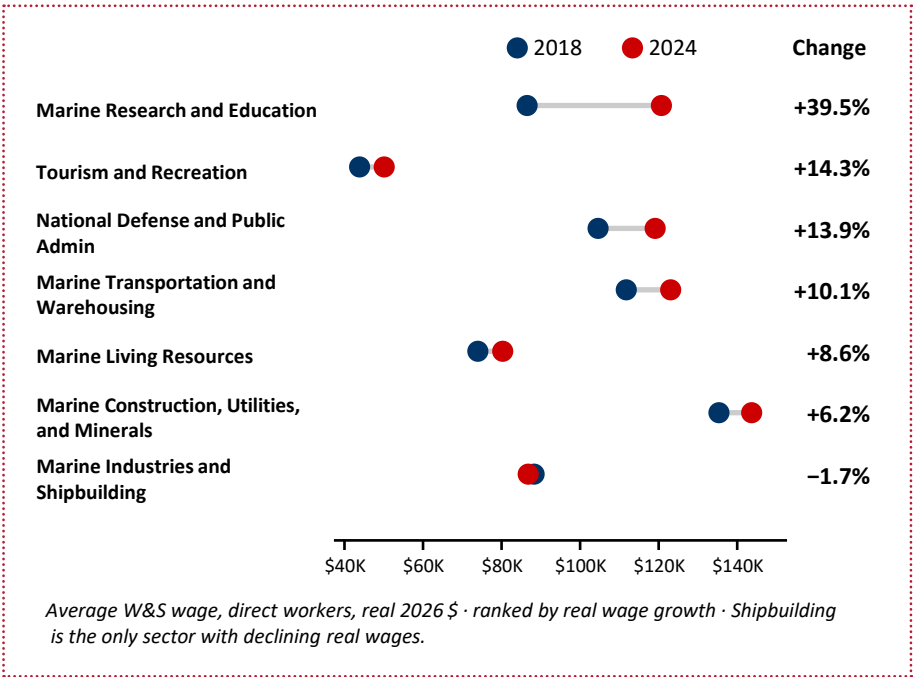
- Lowest-paying Sector:** Tourism and Recreation at \$50,114 average wage (2026\$)
- Highest-paying Sector:** Marine Construction, Utilities, and Minerals at \$143,683 (2026\$)
- Hi/Lo Wage Gap:** 2.87x in 2024; narrowed from 3.09x in 2018 (a 7.1% compression)



REAL WAGE TRENDS, 2018–2024

Because all values in the underlying IMPLAN runs are in real 2026 dollars, the adjacent table is a direct measure of real wage growth (not nominal). Sectors are ranked by real wage Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) over the six-year period. Changes in wage trends are also useful for understanding how industries interact with macroeconomic conditions and in the competition for labor.

Marine Research and Education is the standout: a 39.5% real wage gain over six years (5.71% CAGR), well above any other sector. At the bottom, Marine Industries and Shipbuilding workers had a real-terms pay cut of -1.7% over the same period, the only sector with declining real wages.



WHY IT MATTERS

Tourism, the single largest source of Ocean Economy jobs in Florida, is also the lowest-paying sector. Ocean Economy jobs are anchored by a large base of service-sector jobs near the statewide average wage and a smaller but better-paid tier of skilled positions in marine construction, transportation/warehousing, research, and defense-related public administration.

Among market sectors, Marine Industries and Shipbuilding is the only one in which real wages fell, down 1.7% even as productivity rose 23.8%, a 25.5-point gap. Pay tracked productivity most closely in Marine Research (productivity +43.3%, wages +39.5%) and Marine Living Resources, where real wages rose 8.6% against 6.8% productivity growth — the only sector in which pay outpaced productivity.

Across all seven sectors, labor income declined from 33.1% to 31.6% of output between 2018 and 2024, a drop of 1.5 percentage points. Measured against value added, the more conventional basis, the decline was steeper, from 59.6% to 54.2%, or 5.4 points. On either basis, the share of economic output flowing to worker compensation shrank over the period, with the remainder accruing to capital and property income, depreciation, and taxes on production.

Methods note: Dollar figures are in constant 2026 dollars; growth rates are therefore real. Productivity is value added per direct job. Average wage is IMPLAN employee compensation (which includes employer-paid benefits) per wage-and-salary job and excludes proprietors. Labor income includes proprietor income, a portion of which is mixed labor/capital return.

REAL WAGE COMPRESSION

Cross-sector wage dispersion narrowed modestly between 2018 and 2024. The ratio of wage and salary income in the highest-paid sector to the lowest-paid sector fell from 3.09x to 2.87x. The compression was driven almost entirely by Tourism and Recreation's real wage gain (+14.3%) and Marine Research's real wage growth (+39.5%), not by stagnation at the top. Marine Construction wages rose only modestly (+6.2%) and Marine Industries and Shipbuilding wages declined in real terms (-1.7%), but these moves were small relative to the gains at the bottom and middle of the wage distribution.

CROSS-CUTTING WORKFORCE CONSIDERATIONS THROUGH 2028

Florida's employment growth is decelerating. Florida TaxWatch's Q2 2025 forecast projects employment rising from 10.17 million in 2025 to 10.46 million in 2027 and 10.62 million in 2028, while Florida real GDP growth slows from 2.4% in 2025 to 1.6% in 2026 and 1.2% in 2027 (Florida TaxWatch, 2025).

DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

Additional details are provided in the Methodology which can be found on the Florida Office of Ocean Economy Website. All dollar values are real, in 2026 dollars per the IMPLAN runs. Sector outlook projections through 2028 are from published external sources cited parenthetically in the text and listed in the References section at the end of this document. Florida-context comparisons (~10M total jobs, \$1.79T GSP) use BLS Florida Economy at a Glance (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.) and BEA via FRED data (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis via FRED, n.d.).

IMPLAN total employment counts full-time, part-time, and proprietor jobs, whereas BLS Current Employment Statistics excludes proprietors and the self-employed.





YEAR

IN REVIEW

In its second year, the Office advanced a broad slate of initiatives across its five core focus areas, from entrepreneurship and research to workforce development, policy, and capital access, marking its shift from foundation-building to implementation. Some, including the Ocean Economy Foundations micro-credential, launched in full and are already reaching stakeholders statewide; others, such as the Entrepreneurship Training Program and PIKE, are earlier in development, with more planned in the years ahead. Together, they illustrate the breadth of Florida's Ocean Economy and the Office's role in connecting it across the state.

1. ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

The Entrepreneurship Training Program helps strengthen Florida's ocean innovation pipeline by supporting the progression of ideas from development to commercialization. In partnership with Marine Research Hub, Seaworthy Collective, Ocean Exchange, and Broward County, the Office launched a statewide initiative that provides training, mentorship, technical assistance, industry engagement, and connections to funding opportunities.

Ocean Exchange is leading statewide outreach to engage students across Florida, including regions that are often underrepresented in innovation programming. In 2026, eight collegiate startups will participate in a multi-month training program led by Seaworthy Collective, with opportunities to engage with Ocean Exchange and present at Innovation Day as part of the Southeast Florida Climate Leadership Summit.

By connecting entrepreneurs with industry networks, investment pathways, and commercialization resources, the program helps prepare early-stage companies to attract funding and scale their businesses. This effort supports the Office's broader goal of building a stronger, more connected pipeline from innovation to investment while helping position Florida as a competitive destination for ocean-related entrepreneurship and investment.

2. PORT INNOVATION & KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE (PIKE)

The Port Innovation & Knowledge Exchange (PIKE) connects ports across Florida, the United States, and global markets. PIKE creates a forum for sharing best practices, strengthening operational efficiency, and expanding trade opportunities. By fostering collaboration across port authorities, industry leaders, and international partners, PIKE supports the modernization and competitiveness of Florida's maritime infrastructure. As it grows, PIKE will

position Florida as a leader in port innovation, driving economic growth, enhancing supply chain resilience, and expanding the state's role in global trade.

3. OCEAN ECONOMY DASHBOARD

This year, the Office expanded access to Florida's Ocean Economy data through the development of an interactive Ocean Economy Dashboard. The dashboard consolidates a wide range of indicators related to ports, cruise activity, fisheries, and coastal funding to translate datasets into a clear, visual format that supports both internal analysis and external engagement. By incorporating year-over-year metrics and highlighting recent trends alongside historical context, the dashboard strengthens the Office's ability to communicate economic conditions and changes over time. The tool also improves transparency and accessibility by allowing users to explore indicators dynamically rather than relying solely on static tables or written information. Looking ahead, the dashboard provides a foundation for future enhancements, including additional indicators, deeper regional detail, and expanded analytical features to further support research, policy discussions, and stakeholder decision-making.

4. OCEAN ECONOMY POLICY & APPLIED RESEARCH LAB (OPAL)

The Office launched the Ocean Economy Policy & Applied Research Lab (OPAL) to strengthen the role of data-driven analysis in shaping policy, permitting, and investment decisions. Housed within the Office, OPAL serves as an applied research hub that connects economic analysis, scientific research, and real-world implementation to support informed decision-making at the state and local levels.

OPAL's first major initiative is the development of a white paper defining "living shorelines" in the state of Florida. This work examines the economic, ecological, and regulatory dimensions of nature-based shoreline infrastructure and

helps clarify how these approaches can support coastal resilience while delivering long-term economic value. By aligning environmental considerations with economic outcomes, OPAL is helping reframe resilience as an investment strategy rather than a cost.

This work positions Florida as a leader in coastal resilience and innovation by providing the analytical foundation needed to guide future infrastructure decisions, unlock investment, and support industry growth.

5. COMPREHENSIVE OCEAN RESEARCH ASSET LIBRARY (CORAL) NETWORK

The Comprehensive Ocean Research Asset Library (CORAL) Network is a statewide initiative designed to identify, catalog, and connect Florida's ocean research expertise, institutions, and technical resources. Developed in partnership with Nova Southeastern University, CORAL serves as a centralized research intelligence platform, capturing detailed information on researchers, subject-matter expertise, sector knowledge, and specialized tools and equipment.

CORAL is a statewide inventory of research and collaborations that will be maintained on the Office's website, providing a structured, continuously updated view of Florida's ocean-related research landscape. As CORAL expands, it will serve as a living resource for surveying academic research across disciplines and providing access to available resources and expertise.

Designed to serve researchers, students, universities, industry professionals, policymakers, and the media, CORAL improves access to the knowledge needed to support innovation and decision-making. CORAL provides access to Florida's wide range of research expertise, helping industry turn ideas into marketable solutions and reinforcing the state's position as a leader in the Ocean Economy.

6. WORKFORCE & LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

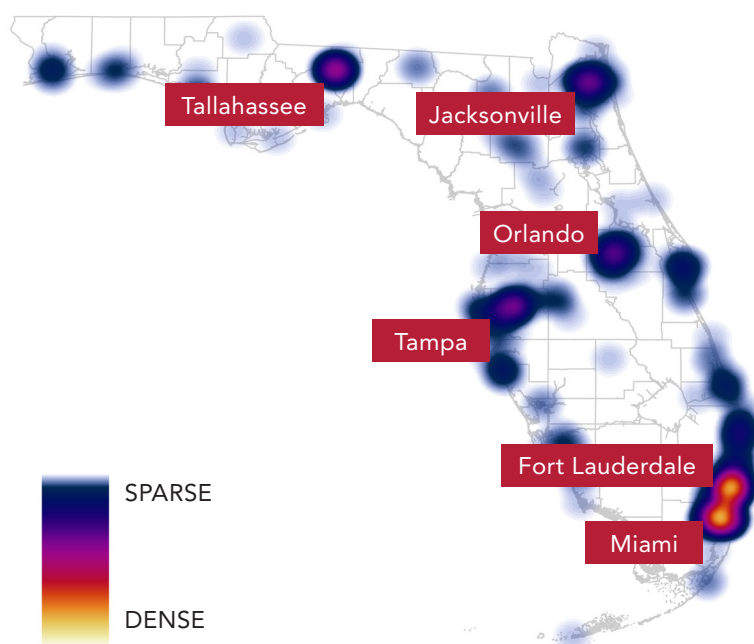
One major focus of the past year has been ensuring that Florida's talent pipeline keeps pace with the evolving needs of ocean-related industries. Through statewide listening sessions, employers consistently identified challenges finding workers with the right mix

of technical skills and applied experience, particularly in engineering, technical, and skilled trade occupations.

To better understand these needs, the Office conducted a comprehensive workforce and labor market analysis examining occupations, workforce demand, regional trends, and education and training pathways across Florida's Ocean Economy.

This analysis revealed a workforce ecosystem comprising approximately 1.8 million workers, across 798 distinct occupations, served by more than 900 academic and workforce training programs. This 1.8 million figure represents the broader statewide labor pool that Ocean Economy employers draw on across these occupations. It is not a count of jobs supported by ocean-related demand, and most of these workers are employed outside the Ocean Economy. It therefore measures something different from the 667,164 jobs the economic contribution analysis attributes to ocean-related demand, and the two figures are not directly comparable. This workforce ecosystem sits within a broader Ocean Economy ecosystem comprising over 68,000 assets across 7 clusters: 67,000+ Industry and Employers, 125+ Workforce and Training Developers, 250+ Educational Institutions, 65+ Research and Development Organizations, 65+ Entrepreneurship and Commercialization Organizations, 1,000+ Industry Associations, and 60+ Public Service and Enabling Organizations. These assets were mapped (see figure below) to show the statewide reach of Ocean Economy activity. The top ~250 assets span every region of Florida, reflecting that ocean-related economic output is not concentrated in any single part of the state.

Ocean Economy Ecosystem - Asset Density



Building on this analysis, the Office identified 50 high-wage, high-demand occupations that offer strong opportunities for economic mobility, with average wages of approximately \$42 per hour. The analysis also highlighted regional workforce differences, emerging skill gaps, and opportunities to strengthen connections among employers, educators, workforce organizations, and training providers.

7. FLORIDA OCEANS • TALENT MARKETPLACE

Building on its Workforce and Labor Market Analysis, the Office launched the Florida Oceans Talent Marketplace, a statewide platform designed to connect employers, job seekers, educators, workforce partners, and industry stakeholders through a shared workforce infrastructure. Scheduled to launch in 2026, the platform will feature 50 Career Pathway Profiles, 20 Sponsored Employer Profiles, featured job postings, and more than 300 aligned education and training programs, drawn from a broader catalog of 900+ programs.

The Marketplace is supported by the Office's broader ecosystem mapping effort and will provide a centralized view of workforce pathways, employment opportunities, education and training resources, and industry partnerships across the state.

The pilot will support up to 3,000 registered users and include:

- 50 high-wage, high-demand occupations representing the strongest opportunities for economic mobility
- 20 employer profiles and featured job postings
- Aggregated data and web-scraped job openings in Florida's Ocean Economy
- 397 education and training pathways aligned to these priority roles
- 255 academic degree pathways
- 142 certificate programs
- 26 registered apprenticeship programs supporting entry into technical and skilled occupations

By improving visibility into jobs, training opportunities, employers, and workforce resources, the Marketplace helps strengthen talent pipelines and improve access to high-quality careers across Florida's Ocean Economy.

TOP 10

HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS (2025–2030)

The occupations below are ranked by projected job growth between 2025 and 2030, measured by the number of new jobs expected to be created over the next five years. This metric serves as the Office's primary indicator of workforce demand and was used to identify priority occupations for inclusion in the Florida Oceans Talent Marketplace. The top 10 occupations have a weighted average median wage of \$41.42 per hour, based on 2025 employment levels.

- General and Operations Managers
- Civil Engineers
- Paralegals and Legal Assistants
- Software Developers
- Project Management Specialists
- Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels
- Financial Managers
- Mechanical Engineers
- Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
- Electrical Engineers

These findings informed broader workforce alignment efforts, including apprenticeship development, industry partnerships, the Credential Library, and workforce policy strategies.



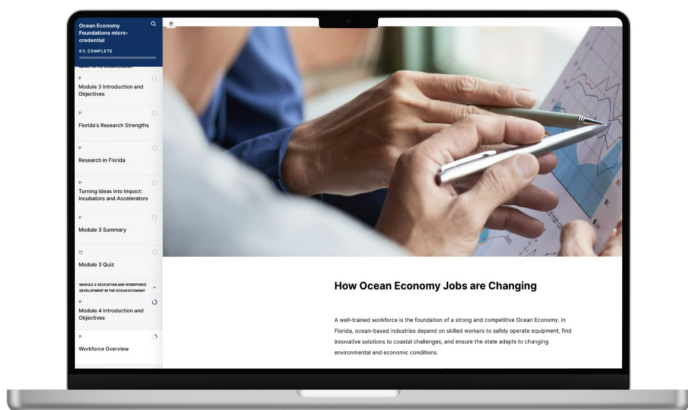
+15.3%

**TOTAL OCEAN ECONOMY
JOB GROWTH**



8. OCEAN ECONOMY FOUNDATIONS SOCIAL IMPACT MICRO-CREDENTIAL

The Office recently launched the Ocean Economy Foundations micro-credential, a six-module, two-hour online program that builds baseline literacy in Florida's Ocean Economy for every Floridian—from students to policymakers to anyone looking to learn about Florida's Ocean Economy. This program provides a clear, accessible foundation in the industries, workforce dynamics, policy considerations, and economic drivers that shape the Ocean Economy. Individuals who complete the course and final quiz will be eligible to receive a digital credential.



The micro-credential ensures that stakeholders who play different roles in the system, from workforce and education partners to industry leaders and decision-makers, have a shared understanding of the Ocean Economy. This supports more informed policy, stronger workforce alignment, and more effective collaboration across sectors.

This statewide resource strengthens Florida's workforce development infrastructure by ensuring that current and future participants in the Ocean Economy are equipped to contribute to its continued growth and competitiveness.

9. STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

This year, the Office expanded support for state and local governments through targeted education and technical assistance. By providing data, analysis, and practical tools, the Office helps policymakers better understand the economic importance of ocean-related industries and the impacts of policy decisions on jobs, businesses, and communities across Florida.

Through regional listening sessions, direct engagement, and resources such as the Ocean Economy Dashboard, the Office translates complex economic and industry information into actionable insights. As a trusted statewide resource, the Office strengthens coordination among government, industry, and research institutions, helping ensure policies are aligned, effective, and supportive of both economic growth and responsible stewardship of Florida's ocean and coastal resources.

10. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Building strong relationships across Florida's Ocean Economy remains a core function of the Office. In 2026, the Office conducted statewide listening sessions and participated in more than 40 engagements, including conferences, regional meetings, industry events, and discussions with organizations, research institutions, and government entities in Florida and abroad.

These efforts helped identify regional priorities, workforce needs, industry challenges, and opportunities for growth while strengthening partnerships across business, academia, workforce organizations, and government. To support continued collaboration, the Office also developed communications guidance, a statewide brand kit, and annual reporting tools that provide a consistent framework for how Florida's Ocean Economy is defined, discussed, and promoted.

Together, these activities strengthen the Office's role as a statewide connector, increase awareness of Florida's Ocean Economy, and help ensure that programs, policies, and investments are informed by stakeholder input and real-world conditions.

LOOKING FORWARD

As the Florida Office of Ocean Economy enters its next phase, several strategic questions will guide future efforts: How can public and private investment best accelerate growth across the Ocean Economy? How can the Office continue to leverage statewide partnerships to maximize impact? What strategies will most effectively address workforce gaps in critical occupations? And how can Florida better understand and incorporate the value of ecosystem services into economic decision-making?

To address these questions, the Office will focus on several implementation priorities moving forward. These include refining and expanding the Ocean Economy Dashboard, growing the Ocean Economy Policy & Applied Research Lab (OPAL), scaling workforce training initiatives, strengthening the state's innovation ecosystem, and advancing pathways that move research, ideas, and technologies from development to commercialization.

Together, these efforts will help position Florida's Ocean Economy for continued growth, competitiveness, and long-term resilience.



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APPENDIX

Partner Acknowledgements

The Florida Office of Ocean Economy's accomplishments in 2026 were made possible through the collaboration, expertise, and support of our many partners across government, industry, academia, workforce development, and nonprofit organizations. As a statewide connector, the Office relies on strong partnerships to identify opportunities, address challenges, and advance initiatives that strengthen Florida's Ocean Economy.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the businesses, researchers, educators, workforce organizations, community leaders, policymakers, and public agencies that contributed their time, knowledge, and resources throughout the year. Their collaboration has helped shape the Office's priorities, inform our work, and expand our impact. Together, we are building a more connected, innovative, and competitive Ocean Economy that creates opportunities for communities across Florida.

A NOTE ON FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027

The Florida Legislature did not include funding for the Office of Ocean Economy in the 2026–2027 state budget. As a result, the Office will operate at reduced capacity in the fiscal year. Florida Atlantic University is providing bridge support to sustain core functions, including the Ocean Economy Dashboard, OPAL, and CORAL Network, while pausing or scaling back new program development.

The Office remains committed to the work ahead and will continue engaging with the Legislature, industry partners, and FAU leadership to build the case for sustained state investment in Florida’s Ocean Economy. We are grateful for the partnerships that have carried this work forward and look ahead to resuming full momentum as funding allows.



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Driving economic growth and opportunity
through data, research, and collaboration
to strengthen Florida's Ocean Economy and
coastal communities.

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