

6. Community Policies

The following policies, organized by the community's goals (see Section 1, with each of the relevant goals listed below), were developed in conjunction with all stakeholders and are intended to provide guidance to address the Needs and Opportunities identified in this Plan, and to provide a framework for the development of the Community Work Program. The Community Work Program (see Section 7) then addresses the Needs and Opportunities through specific projects, for each of which the participants, anticipated cost, and time frame are identified.

1. Economic Development

Goal: Meet the needs of an expanding local economy by supporting workforce training, education, and small business development.

Policies
1.1 The continued growth of primary regional economic engines, such as Valdosta State University, South Georgia Medical Center, Moody Air Force Base, Wiregrass Georgia Technical College, Georgia Military College, local agriculture, and sports, should be promoted and supported.
1.2 The continued funding and support of economic development programs, financial incentives, direct financing, etc., should be ensured in order to attract and retain new and expanding businesses in the region that will grow the regional tax base and bring high-wage jobs.
1.3 A skilled workforce should be cultivated with positive ethics, life skills, professionalism, and educational levels in order to create and maintain long-term, meaningful employment opportunities around a balanced economic base.
1.4 Public/private partnerships between workforce training agencies, counties, cities, local businesses, and schools (K-12 and Technical) should be encouraged and coordinated for the development of work skill programs and career education programs.
1.5 Continued utilization of skills centers should be promoted through the Workforce Investment Program and the Labor Department, with targeted outreach to low- and moderate-income persons.
1.6 Efforts should be made to attract and retain young professionals to the Greater Lowndes community to assist in achieving community goals such as providing an adequate workforce and maintaining high wage jobs.
1.7 Agencies and programs that work with the development of small businesses and community entrepreneurs should be supported, in order to encourage positive economic development and self-sufficiency, especially building on existing strong specialties such as local agriculture and sports.
1.8 The establishment of a business incubator should be encouraged.