



An Economic Impact Analysis of RESPECT of Florida - Final Report

For:

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RESPECT of Florida**



**By: The Florida State
University Center for
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Executive Summary

The Florida State University Center for Economic Forecasting and Analysis (CEFA) is undertaking an economic impact analysis to assess the economic contributions of the RESPECT of Florida program. Established in 1974, RESPECT is a cornerstone initiative of the Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (Florida ARF) and aims to empower individuals with disabilities through meaningful employment, particularly focusing on those with visual impairments and severe challenges. As a 501(c)3 non-profit designated by the Department of Management Services, RESPECT administers Florida's State Use Program, modeled after the National Industries for the Severely Handicapped (NISH) AbilityOne federal program.

As outlined in Florida Statutes, RESPECT's core mission is threefold: to maximize personal independence for blind and severely disabled individuals through employment, to expand and maintain a consistent market for products and services they produce, and to enhance their dignity and self-sufficiency by minimizing reliance on public assistance. The program's success is evident in the 2022-2023 highlights. During this period, RESPECT employed over 1,000 individuals with disabilities, with an average hourly wage of \$12.76. Participants collectively worked over 1 million hours, generating total sales exceeding \$62 million. RESPECT also collaborated with 42 partner Employment Centers, awarded a \$12,500 micro-enterprise grant, and secured a significant grant for Project SEARCH.

Economic Impact Analysis Results

The RESPECT Program of Florida plays a substantive role as an economic engine for the state. The project has created 2,953 jobs, with 1,946 direct positions and an additional 1,007 jobs generated as indirect impacts. This translates to a powerful \$155 million boost in economic output directly linked to RESPECT's business activity. But the impact ripples outward, with the total annual economic output for Florida topping a projected \$344 million.

The impact goes beyond immediate numbers. Studies of similar programs across the U.S. highlight the ripple effect they create. Local economies thrive from the influx of jobs generated by service and product sales. Moreover, programs like RESPECT can demonstrably improve the quality of life for people with disabilities, fostering social inclusion, equality, and a reduction in discrimination.

**RESPECT
BY THE
NUMBERS
2023**



\$344 million
ECONOMIC TOTAL
OUTPUT IMPACT



2,953
JOBS CREATED



45
MEMBER
AGENCIES



\$130 million
ECONOMIC TOTAL
INCOME IMPACT



\$34 million
TOTAL GENERATED
FEDERAL TAX

Introduction

The purpose of this research study, directed by the FSU Center for Economic Forecasting and Analysis (CEFA), is to conduct an economic impact analysis study for RESPECT of Florida. The RESPECT of Florida program, a cornerstone initiative of the Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (Florida ARF), offers a simple yet powerful mission: to empower individuals with disabilities. Focused on those with visual impairments and severe challenges, RESPECT creates a path to independence and dignity through meaningful employment. Established in 1974 by the Florida Legislature, RESPECT is a 501(c)3 non-profit designated by the Department of Management Services to administer Florida's State Use Program, a program modeled after the National Industries for the Severely Handicapped (NISH) AbilityOne federal program. RESPECT's core mission, as outlined in Florida Statutes, is to encourage and assist blind and other severely disabled individuals to achieve maximum personal independence through meaningful employment, expand and maintain a consistent market for products and services produced by individuals with disabilities and enhance the dignity and self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities by minimizing their dependence on public assistance¹.

The proposed study entails performing an economic analysis pertaining to the Florida RESPECT of Florida annual contracts that result in employment of thousands of individuals with disabilities in Florida. A good example of the benefits of those contracts are present in the 2022-2023 RESPECT report of Florida highlights. The year 2022-23 proved to be a successful year for the RESPECT program, empowering individuals with disabilities and contributing significantly to the Florida economy. Here are some key achievements:

- Employed over 1,000 individuals with disabilities.
- Average hourly wage reached \$12.76.
- Participants worked over 1 million hours.
- Total sales surpassed \$62 million.
- Collaborated with 42 partner Employment Centers.
- Awarded a \$12,500 micro-enterprise grant.
- Secured a significant grant for Project SEARCH.

This report delves into the existing body of knowledge through a Literature Review following this Introduction. Then, the core of the research is presented with the Economic Data and Methodology, Economic Impact Results sections detailing the Economic Analysis. Finally, the report provides a Conclusions section, summarizing the findings and their significance.

¹ <https://www.respectofflorida.org/category/295/About-Us.html>

Literature Review

The following sections provide a review of the literature concerning studies on the effects of increasing the labor force participation rate of people with disabilities. The literature review is divided into global, national, and state sections. Also included in the literature review are studies that quantify the economic impact that firms derive through the implementation of more inclusive policies. Additionally, the review details studies on the cost-benefit analysis of vocational rehabilitation programs.

Global

Globally, there have been several studies that examine the economic benefits of increasing the labor force participation of people living with disabilities. Marti et. al. (2012) examined the labor market participation (LMP) of working-age individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI) in Switzerland. The study found that gender, age, perceived importance of work, and vocational counselling are among the most significant factors impacting LMP for individuals living with SCI. Additionally, from the results of a randomly distributed survey, participants signaled satisfaction derived from their employment as the most important motivation to work. Interestingly, the need for money was perceived less significant as a factor than establishing social connections with others.

Beyer et al. (2016) study examines the advantages of an open labor market for individuals with disabilities and disabilities in society in the European Union. Despite a wealth of evidence, people with disabilities face challenges when joining the labor market for the first time. However, Beyer et. al. (2016) proposed that higher investment in inclusive work environments for disabled people will benefit governments, and taxpayers financially in the long run. The study established that employed individuals with psychosocial disabilities can lead to a decrease in absence due to sickness, increase staff engagement and productivity, and lower staff turnover, resulting in reduced recruitment costs. This also indicates a reduction in the need for temporary or long-term disability welfare benefits, early retirement, and additional pension years, leading to significant cost savings for taxpayers. Beyer et. al. (2016) emphasized that inclusive employment not only provides financial benefits but also plays an important part in achieving non-financial outcomes. For instance, those outcomes that pertain to a better quality of life, improved social integration, and improvement of psychosocial and physical health.

Zhou et. al. (2019) employs 2016 Australian census data to investigate the impact that socioeconomic factors and geographic variation have on the labor force participation rate (LFPR) of working-age people with disability. The report generated three models to highlight the factors that significantly affect the LFPR for disabled individuals. Zhou et. al. (2019) finds

that a significant increase in the LFPR for people with disability occurs in areas where the median income, employment rates, and overall market opportunities are higher. Additionally, the study concludes that a 12-year and post-school educational attainment have visible and significant positive effects on the LFPR of people with disabilities.

National

A literature review of studies at the national level was conducted next.

NYSID Economic Impact on New York

An economic impact analysis of the New York State Industries for the Disabled (NYSID) was conducted in August 2019. The report quantified the fiscal and social value NYSID created through the Preferred Source Program. The Preferred Source Program provides employment opportunities for those with disabilities in New York State. To quantify the economic impact of the program, multiplier analysis (using IMPLAN multipliers) was utilized. Multiplier analysis has been employed to gauge the economic impact of disability service providers and social enterprises on New York State. Multiplier analysis estimates the direct, indirect, and induced effects of economic inputs. Service providers spend money on goods, services, and payroll to offer their services. The direct effects are the jobs they create and the value of their services. They also create indirect effects for their suppliers and vendors when they buy from them. For example, when a provider contracts with a food wholesaler or a local garage, it creates economic activity. Indirect effects are the jobs and outputs generated for these suppliers and their supply chains. The induced effects happen when employees spend their paychecks on things like housing, food, and entertainment, thus circulating money in the community. The specific economic inputs used were NYSID contract data and NYSID employment data. Overall, the program generated \$368.9 million in economic output for New York State and employed over 6,500 disabled individuals. The program also contributed \$8 million in federal and state tax revenue, and reduced spending commitments to social assistance programs by over \$16 million.

Economic Impact of the Purchasing from People with Disabilities Program on Texas

An economic impact analysis of the Texas Purchasing from People with Disabilities program was conducted in 2021 to estimate the contribution of the program to the Texas economy. The program provides employment opportunities for disabled Texans. The impact analysis covered both fiscal year 2019 and 2020. Regional Input-Output Modeling System (RIMS II) multipliers, along with detailed expenditure data of the program, were used to generate impact estimates. In fiscal year 2019, the program added \$304 million to Texas' state gross domestic product, generated roughly \$167 million in total personal income, and created over 9,400 jobs. For fiscal year 2020, the program added \$296 million to Texas' state gross

domestic product, generated \$162 million in total personal income, and created over 8,900 jobs.

Economic Impact of the AbilityOne Program

An economic impact analysis was conducted to quantify the value of the AbilityOne program. The AbilityOne program provides employment opportunities for people with disabilities throughout the United States. The economic impacts included increased tax revenue, decreased government spending on federal benefits programs, and increased local economic activity. The total estimated impact of the program was \$370 million. For every dollar spent administering the program, \$2.66 were generated in economic activity.

Economic Impact of Disability and Inclusion Work Policies

In 2018, Accenture, one of the world's leading consulting firms in collaboration with Disability:IN and the American Association of People with Disabilities (AADP) published *Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage*. As the third-largest market segment in the U.S., the report estimates that GDP could increase by \$25 billion if just one percent (out of the 15.1 million working-age persons with disability) joined the labor force. The report also suggests that companies that excel in implementing disability and inclusion policies see on average, 28 percent higher revenues, double the net income, and 30 percent higher profit margins compared to companies that lack the same disability and inclusion standards. Additionally, during the timeframe of the study, companies that improved their disability and inclusion policies experienced substantial increments to their shareholders returns, with some companies increasing shareholders returns by 53 percent.

Consistent with the findings from 2018, *The Disability Inclusion Imperative*, a different report published by Accenture in partnership with Disability:IN establishes that companies with defined disability and inclusion policies are more likely to benefit from a 25 percent increase in productivity or \$845 million in revenue compared to the competition. Furthermore, Morgan et. al. (2023) examines the benefits firms and society derive from including persons with disabilities as members of more diverse boards. The study also finds that companies that have a board that includes individuals with disabilities are in a more advantageous position to engage in responsible governance, efficient risk management, and optimal decision-making. Additionally, they also experience improved customer alignment, employee engagement, and transparency, in comparison to companies that do not have disability representation on their boards. Finally, Morgan et al. (2023) states that persons with disabilities have significant purchasing power. In 2018, the American Institutes for Research found that working-age disabled people had \$490 billion in after-tax disposable income. Companies that promote disability inclusion can tap into 10.7 million potential hires, producing huge financial rewards.

In 2022, Disability:IN, the world's leading nonprofit resource for business disability inclusion, conducted an economic impact analysis of a potential increase in the number of small businesses owned by people with disabilities in the U.S. The report establishes that people with disabilities are twice as likely to be self-employed, therefore, if 25 percent of all small businesses in the U.S identify as disability-owned, the contribution to the economy would be substantial. The report estimates that \$3.7 trillion would be generated in total revenues and 22 million jobs would be created as a result. Also, the direct economic impact via wages paid is estimated to be about \$1.2 trillion with \$2.4 trillion in indirect and induced impact from wages.

Economic Impact of Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

Wilhelm et al. (2012) examined the economic impact of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program provided by the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, which assists individuals with impairments in their employment endeavors. The study was comprised of 6,030 participants aged between 14 and 64 years. To establish the resulting economic benefit from participating in VR, Wilhelm et. al. (2012) divided the participants between a comparison group and a program group with the latter receiving VR services while the former did not. The disability level is categorized as either not significant, significant, or most significant. Upon doing a regression analysis to examine the quarterly earnings of individuals, the Wilhelm et al. (2012) discovers that the differences earnings between individuals who received assistance and those who did not was \$3,534 in the first year, \$3,347 in the second year, and \$2,976 in the third year. Although both the comparison and program groups experienced a wage boost after the eligibility determination, individuals who receive services receive an additional \$1,506 per quarter relative to the baseline group. The study established that individuals who received VR are 15 percent more likely to be employed compared to their counterparts. As a result of the VR program, the study finds that the state of Utah can achieve savings exceeding \$71 million by reducing reliance on public programs and increasing tax revenue. Furthermore, the VR program extends beyond just one-year duration and persists throughout the participants' lives. The VR initiative in Utah has resulted in a significant increase in earnings, totaling more than \$282 million. This increase translates to a rise of over \$56 million in earnings and over \$226 million in employment opportunities in the long-run.

In a similar analysis on the economic benefits of vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs, Renfro et. al. (2013) quantified the return on investment derived from VR programs in the state of Oregon. The study employs employment and demographic data of participants who culminated their rehabilitation programs between 2006 and 2008. To obtain more precise estimates of VR programs, Renfro et. al. (2013) divided the sample into a control group and a program group. From the empirical analysis, the study finds that in the first quarter after program closure (or experiment), participation in a VR program resulted in \$1,353

additional wages, \$4,941 within a year after the program initiation, and \$3,653 in additional wages after three years. The study notes that in the long-run, wage differences between the program and comparison group vanish, as wages converge for the two groups.

Benefits of Special Education Programs in Texas

Additional research has been conducted to examine the long-term effects of special education (SE). Ballis et. al. (2021) employs data from the Texas Education Agency which collects information on all students enrolled in the Texas public school system. The database also provides yearly data on demographics, academic and behavioral performance, participation in special education programs, and specific disabilities. Using observations from 1999 through 2000, and 2004 and 2005, samples were comprised of a total of 227,555 observations. Ballis et. al. (2021) used a Difference-in-Difference (DID) and Instrumental Variables (IV) approach, to analyze the effects of eliminating the SE program. In the DID approach, The study conducted an event-study analysis to evaluate the impact of the SE enrollment target on each fifth-grade cohort separately, during 2004 and 2005. Ballis et. al. (2021) finds that removal of SE programs for students with mild disabilities results in a 2.0 percentage point decrease in the likelihood of completing high school and a 1.2 percentage point decrease in the likelihood of enrolling in college. On the other hand, the IV approach estimates that the removal of SE programs for students on the margin of SE placement decision results in a 51.9 percentage point decrease in high school completion and 37.9 percentage point decrease in college attainment.

State and Local

A literature review of studies at the state and local levels follows next.

Bellante (1971) conducted a thorough cost-benefit analysis and economic impact analysis of the increase in labor force participation rate of persons with disabilities in the state of Florida. Specifically, the study sought out to determine the societal gains of increased participation rates of vocational rehabilitation for disabled people in Florida. Additionally, the study documented the cost of disability to the economy of Florida via lost output.

The study notes that if all 217,467 disabled person in the state of Florida had participated in a vocational rehabilitation program at the beginning 1969, the personal income across the state would have increased by at least \$425 million in 1969 dollars. However, if participation rates of vocational rehabilitation programs do not increase, the opportunity cost indication is that an amount close to \$425 million will be forgone in output. The study found that there is a significant increase in the benefit-cost ratio for more educated participants. Bellante (1971) calculated the discounted present value of welfare savings once individuals were removed from public assistance rolls. Employing the human capital approach, the study found that the welfare savings generated from all the persons engaged in vocational

rehabilitation in 1969 was approximately \$3.5 million in 1969 dollars. Additionally, the estimated tax contributions over the participants' life were about \$44 million in 1969 dollars.

Interestingly, Bellante (1971) notes that the visually impaired had the highest probability of fully rehabilitating relative to participants living with mental disorders, who experienced the lowest probability of rehabilitating.

Another report prepared by Rohani et. al. (1999) analyzed the costs and societal benefits derived from vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs in the state of Florida. Like Bellante (1971), the study measures the cost of vocational rehabilitation through forgone productivity (lost output). Employing data from the Social Security Administration and from the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration, the study estimated that the lost output attributed to unemployment was \$2.4 billion in 1999 dollars. Rohani et. al. (1999) noted that the loss is likely to be greater as the number of disabled people that did not receive vocational rehabilitation was underestimated in 1998.

Moreover, the report highlights the potential savings and economic benefits that Florida residents perceive from increasing the labor force participation rate of persons with disabilities. At the time of the study, 9,598 disabled persons concluded their rehabilitation programs; in total 29,475 were removed from Florida's VR programs. Rohani et. al. (1999) found that annual earnings increased by \$3,001 per year across all closed cases for a grand total of about \$88 million; far surpassing the total estimated cost of fully rehabilitated participants of \$48 million. Likewise, total tax contributions for the following year increased by approximately \$20 million in 1999 dollars. The study concluded that the benefits associated with the expansion of VR programs far exceeded the costs.

In 2019 the Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation published a comprehensive report detailing the performance of Florida's VR programs from FY 2014-2015 through FY 2018-2019. The report notes that compared to FY 2017-2018, FY 2018-2019 saw an increase in the number of after program participants that resulted in employment; the average number of hours worked per week; and the average weekly salary of VR program participants. For instance, the number that culminated in employment increased by approximately 25 percent to 5,924, the number of hours worked per week saw a relatively small increment to 29 hours from 28 hours, and the average weekly salary went up to \$370 from \$340 after program. Lastly, the report details that the return on investment for each dollar spent went up from \$6.66 to \$8.34.

Following the report published in 2019, the Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation published a cost methodology rate study in 2023. The study sought to provide a comprehensive review of all the services provided. Also of interest, the study provided a comparative analysis of Florida's VR programs relative to the national average and peer states. Florida's VR programs derived the third highest employment rate in the

nation, of 53.5 percent, only behind Texas and Indiana with each experiencing a 56 percent employment rate after program experiment. On the other hand, Florida had the second lowest median monthly earnings, \$4,454, among all employed VR participants in 2021.

RESPECT Program Statistics and Demographics

Sales of Goods and Services

Table 1 describes the overall product sales in dollars by categories from the years 2019 to 2023. The amount within the parentheses below the "product sales" is the percentage of each category in each year. Over the past five years, the RESPECT program has contributed roughly \$30 million in total revenue, averaging \$6 million dollars per year. The product sales are divided into seven categories: Drug Testing Kits and Supplies, First Aid and Safety, Janitorial and Kitchen, Medical, Others, Offices, and Promotional. In the year 2023, the largest amount category sales are First Aid and Safety with \$3,444,060, which is approximately 53 percent of total product sales for that year. More breakdown detail by categories is provided in Figure 1 and Table 2.

Figure 1 illustrates the breakdown of product sales in 2023. The inner circle displays the proportions of seven categories relative to the total product sales, while the outer circle provides detailed information on each category. The total sales for 2022–2023 totaled \$6,478,130. As mentioned earlier, approximately 53 percent of total product sales come from the First Aid and Safety category, with roughly 50 percentage points out of the 53 percent attributed to Prophylactics (All Types). Another significant category is "Others", approximately 22 percent of total product sales, of which approximately 19 percentage points out of the 22 percent are related to Transponders. Drug Testing Kits and Supplies accounted for approximately 17 percent of the total product sales. Additionally, about 5 percent of the total product sales come from the Promotional category, including items such as Award Plaques, Clothing with Silk Screened or Embroidered designs, and various other promotional products.

Table 1. Total Product Sales from Year 2019 to Year 2023

Product Type	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Drug Testing Kits and Supplies	\$1,046,827 (17%)	\$888,305 (15%)	\$761,722 (13%)	\$887,576 (14%)	\$1,079,659 (17%)
First Aid and Safety	\$2,873,030 (47%)	\$2,637,509 (45%)	\$2,831,549 (48%)	\$2,981,093 (50%)	\$3,444,060 (53%)
Janitorial and Kitchen	\$221,601 (4%)	\$363,258 (6%)	\$206,723 (4%)	\$108,776 (2%)	\$94,684 (1%)
Medical	\$82,743 (1%)	\$103,414 (2%)	\$136,146 (2%)	\$68,628 (1%)	\$58,270 (1%)
Others	\$1,618,930 (26%)	\$1,477,314 (25%)	\$1,385,514 (24%)	\$1,472,023 (25%)	\$1,407,727 (22%)
Office	\$87,523 (1%)	\$60,574 (1%)	\$63,963 (1%)	\$56,721 (1%)	\$52,315 (1%)
Promotional	\$237,014 (4%)	\$319,898 (6%)	\$503,088 (8%)	\$411,160 (7%)	\$341,412 (5%)
Total	\$6,167,669	\$5,850,272	\$5,888,705	\$5,985,977	\$6,478,130

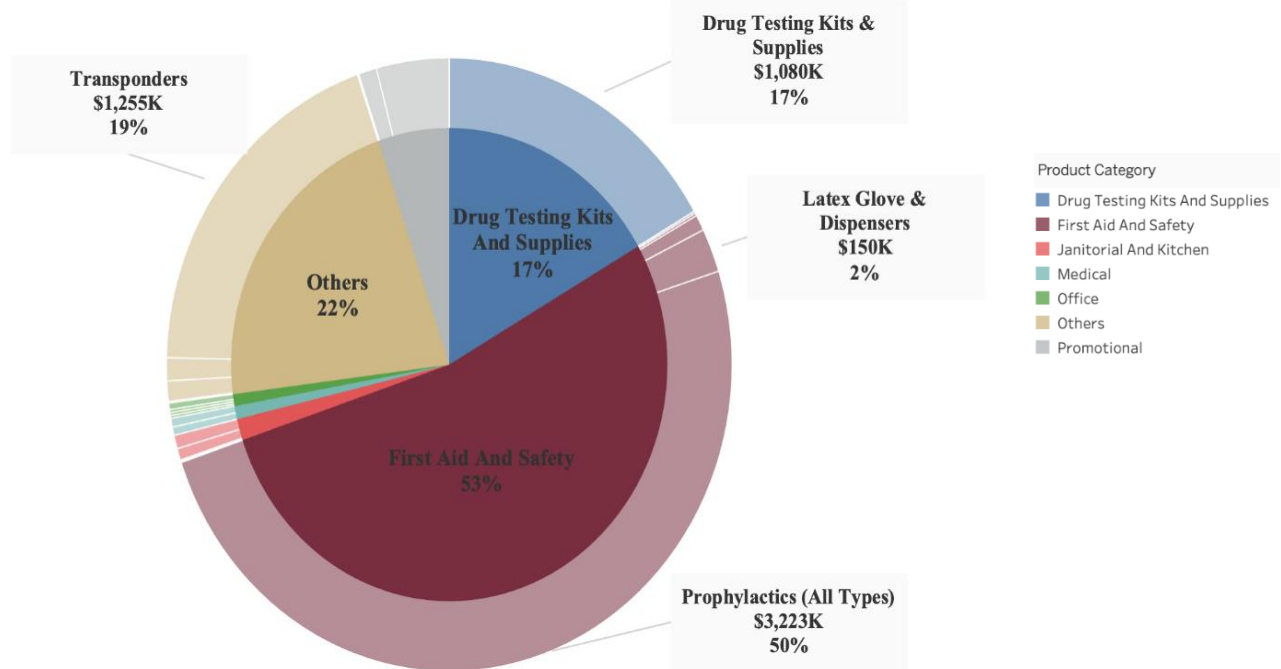


Figure 1. Product Sales by Category in Year 2023

Table 2. Product Sale Categories in Detail

Product Sale Categories	Detail
Drug Testing Kits and Supplies	Drug Testing Kits & Supplies
First Aid and Safety	Alcohol Pads
	Biohazard Kits/Refills
	CPR Kits/Refills
	Ear Plugs
	Bandages/Elastic Bandages
	Personal Protective Equipment
	First Aid Kits/Refills
	Latex Glove & Dispensers
	Prophylactics (All Types)
	Safety Glasses & Goggles/PPE
	Sunscreen
	Toothbrushes
Janitorial and Kitchen	Dust Mops
	Mop Products/Handles
	Waste/Lift Station Cleaners
	Sanitizer Surface Spray
	Hand Sanitizer & Dispensers
	Soap & Dispensers
	Trash Can Liners
Medical	Medical & Dental Supplies
	HemoPoint Meter/Microcuvettes
	Masks
Others	Apparel, Non-Customizable
	Bicycle Rack
	Flags (State, USA, & POW)
	Jumper Cables
	Ladder Lifter
	Custom Metal/Sandblasted Signs
	Survey Stakes
	City Water Kits
	Transponders

Table 2. Product Sale Categories in Detail, Cont.

Product Sale Name	Product Detail
Office	Batteries
	Air Duster Canister
	Calendars (All Types)
	Clocks
	Coffee Tea
	Laser & Ink-Jet Cartridges
	Pens, Pencils, Highlighters & Markers
	Protective Shields - Free Standing
	Staplers/Accessories/Hole Punch
	Aquas Board 70 inch
Promotional	Award Plaques
	Clothing-Silk Screened/Embroidery
	Promotional, Various

Table 3 displays the total sales value of services across several categories and years. There are a total of five categories for services sales: Janitorial (Rest Areas), Janitorial (Non-Rest Areas), Call Center Operations, Litter Pick-Up, and All Others. The "All Others" category includes all the categories listed in Table 3 that are not included in the previous category list. Figure 2 illustrates the annual sales of services, represented by various colors. There are noticeable changes throughout time. Janitorial (Rest Areas) saw a significant doubling in sales in 2023 compared to 2019, indicating greater demand for cleaning services in Rest Areas. Call Center Operations experienced a substantial growth in sales, with a more than nine-fold increase from 2019 to 2023. This indicates a major expansion or increased use of call center services. Table 4 presents the variance in service sales between main employment centers and total employment centers from 2020 to 2023. Overall, there was a \$29,246,278 increase in service sales across all employment centers during this period. However, the top five main employment centers contributed \$23,393,995 to this growth. Particularly noteworthy is Lighthouse Central Florida in Orlando, which accounted for over half of the total increase, with service sales reaching \$15,879,754 from years 2020 to 2023. This significant rise is due to the introduction of a new service, "DCF Dept Economic Self Sufficiency (ESS)," after 2020. More detailed information can be found in Table 5.

Table 3: Services Sales from Year 2019 to 2023

Services Sales	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Call Center Operations	\$1,211,177	\$1,907,597	\$3,080,686	\$12,334,681	\$17,733,457
Call Monitoring	\$6,500	\$6,000	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$8,700
Document Shredding	\$2,665	\$2,230	\$2,509	\$2,043	\$160
Fleet Vehicle Detailing	\$4,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Floor Care	\$0	\$0	\$2,071	\$3,172	\$0
Herbicide Treatment	\$62,750	\$114,627	\$206,983	\$286,497	\$253,331
Kitchen Cleaning Services	\$3,360	\$3,240	\$15,360	\$3,360	\$2,520
Janitorial (Non-Rest Area)	\$9,277,630	\$9,484,573	\$9,815,181	\$9,282,121	\$9,131,755
Janitorial (Rest Areas)	\$12,282,201	\$13,483,816	\$13,682,294	\$17,323,534	\$26,979,405
Lawn Care Services	\$270,090	\$97,416	\$132,602	\$244,736	\$110,814
Litter Pick-Up	\$1,328,470	\$1,340,613	\$1,312,708	\$1,516,310	\$1,903,795
Mowing	\$386,768	\$364,155	\$221,629	\$158,765	\$114,799
Nursing Consultants	\$137,567	\$42,674	\$43,320	\$64,718	\$68,907
PPP Services	\$645,782	\$135,768	\$0	\$0	\$0
Parking Meter Collections	\$77,470	\$48,528	\$33,479	\$37,503	\$39,905
Refuse Collection	\$72,718	\$69,794	\$77,330	\$37,176	\$0
Special Services	-\$64	\$240	\$42,813	\$0	\$0
Total Service Sales by Year	\$25,769,284	\$27,101,271	\$28,676,466	\$41,302,116	\$56,347,549

Years: ● 2020 ● 2021 ● 2022 ● 2023

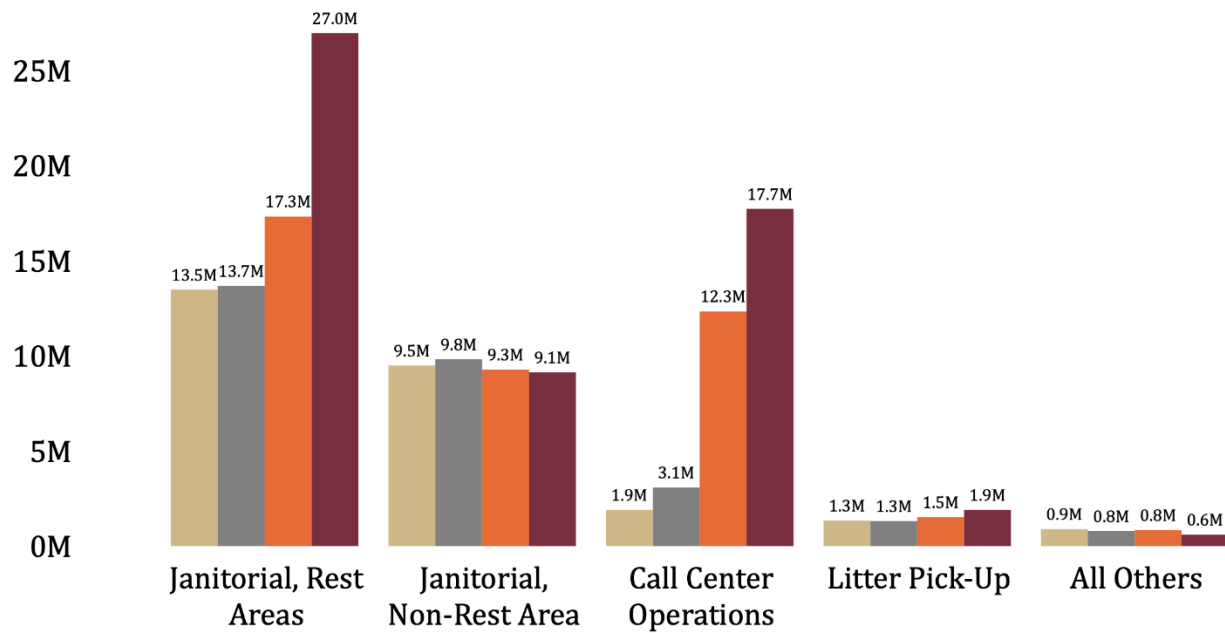


Figure 2. Total Services Sales by Category from 2020 to 2023

Table 4. Difference(s) Between 5 Main Employment Centers Service Sales and Total Employment Centers Service Sales from 2020 to 2023

Main Employment Centers	2020	2021	2022	2023	Differences from 2020 to 2023
ARC Nassau, Yulee	\$695,593	\$767,545	\$1,675,821	\$2,808,263	\$2,112,670
ARC North Florida, Live Oak	\$1,442,605	\$1,411,273	\$1,298,495	\$2,615,561	\$1,172,956
CARC-Advocates f/Citizens w/Disabilities, Lake City	\$1,375,481	\$1,448,979	\$1,998,246	\$3,397,373	\$2,021,892
Lighthouse Central Florida, Orlando	\$1,571,552	\$2,843,996	\$12,059,803	\$17,451,306	\$15,879,754
Stewart-Marchman-Act Behavioral Healthcare	\$2,686,527	\$2,967,318	\$4,207,952	\$4,893,250	\$2,206,723
Sum of Main Employment Centers	\$7,771,758	\$9,439,111	\$21,240,317	\$31,165,753	\$23,393,995
Total Employment Centers Service Sales	\$27,101,271	\$28,676,466	\$41,302,116	\$56,347,549	\$29,246,278

Table 5. Lighthouse Central Florida in Orlando Breakdown in Service Sales

Lighthouse Service Category	2020	2021	2022	2023
DCF Dept Economic Self Sufficiency (ESS)	-	\$150,139	\$8,194,933	\$14,210,981
DCF Hope Line Call Center	-	-	\$793,258	\$150,544
DEO Contact Center	\$1,213,760	\$2,275,075	\$2,864,420	\$3,081,081
Seminole County Call Monitoring	\$6,000	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$8,700
APD Connect Call Center Help Desk	\$351,792	\$411,282	\$199,692	-
Totals (per Sale Item)	\$1,571,552	\$2,843,996	\$12,059,803	\$17,451,306

Figure 3 illustrates the annual sales of goods from RESPECT, including product and service goods totals. The impact of COVID-19 has resulted in a slight overall rise between the years 2019 and 2021. However, there has been a significant increase since year 2021, with an annual growth rate above 30% when compared to previous years. By 2023, the overall sales of items are expected to nearly double, increasing from approximately \$32 million in 2019 to approximately \$63 million in 2023.

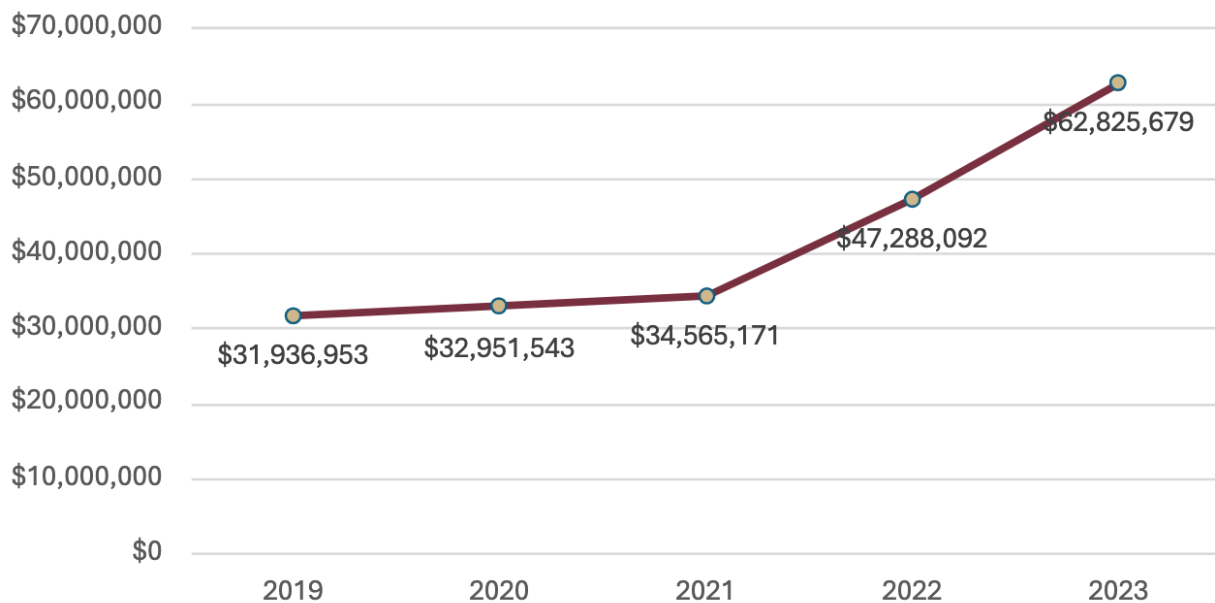


Figure 3: Annual Sales Trends of the RESPECT Program

RESPECT Program Effects for Disability Workers

Table 6 illustrates the economic impact on individuals with disabilities resulting from the start of the RESPECT program. The total number of employees with disabilities is approximately 1,000 per year in the RESPECT program. The average hourly wage and total direct disability work hours showed a consistent, gradual growth each year, except for a slight drop in total direct work hours in 2021. However, the following year, the work hours returned to their previous levels. Figure 4 illustrates the annual change in the overall total pay roll benefit pattern. The overall pay roll benefit, including health insurance, U.S. federal payroll tax (FICA), sick leave, and other benefits, has been consistently growing by over 14% annually since 2020. In 2023, the overall payroll benefits have increased by almost 24% compared to the previous year. This indicates that there is an approximate annual improve of \$680 per disability worker from the year 2022 to the year 2023.

Table 6. RESPECT Program Effects from Years 2019 to 2023

Program Effects	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of Employees	1,193	1,178	972	1,074	1,164
Average Hourly Wage	\$9.83	\$10.43	\$10.79	\$11.92	\$12.76
Total Direct Work Hours	855,484	879,041	859,342	918,285	1,097,429
Payroll without Benefit(s)	\$8,410,090	\$9,167,763	\$9,269,199	\$10,946,964	\$13,998,116
Total Benefit(s); not Including Payroll	\$2,607,565	\$2,381,207	\$2,720,834	\$3,323,421	\$4,110,588
Total Payroll	\$11,017,655	\$11,548,970	\$11,990,033	\$14,270,385	\$18,108,704

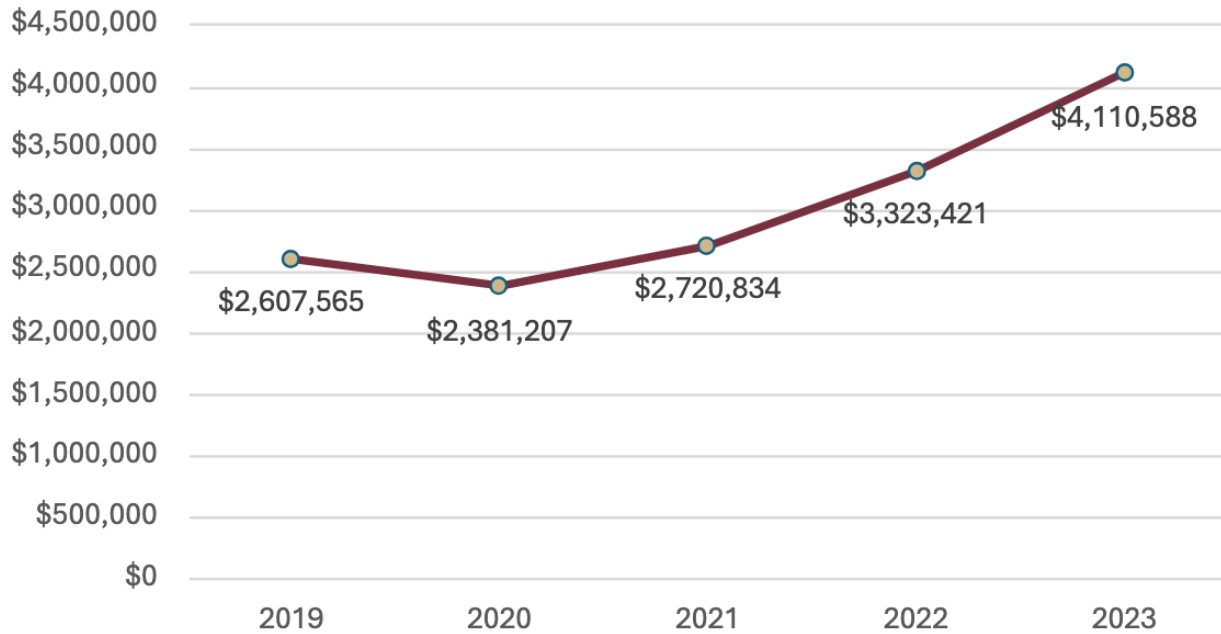


Figure 4. Total Payroll Benefits by Year

Florida Employment Rate(s)

Table 7 reveals that approximately 6.3% of Florida's labor force comprises individuals with disabilities, translating to around six disabled workers per 100 in year 2022. However, a striking disparity emerges when comparing employment rates between individuals with, and without, disabilities. The data reveals that 78% of people without disabilities are employed, whereas only 42.8% of individuals with disabilities are employed. This significant gap underscores the pressing need for specific interventions and support systems to encourage inclusion and equal opportunities.

Table 7. Florida Employment or Unemployment Rate with or without Disability in Year 2022

Florida Employment	Disability	No Disability
In Labor Force	626,916	9,384,460
Labor Rate	6.3%	93.7%
Employed	570,349	9,045,919
Employed Rate	42.8%	78%
Unemployed	56,567	338,541
Population	1,332,245	11,590,553
Total Population in Percentage	10.31%	89.69%

Economic Data and Methodology

During the months of January and February, the FSU CEFA research team collected data from Florida ARF relating to expenditures, revenue and employment (in 2024\$) associated with the RESPECT program in Florida. The data was provided by Florida ARF on data spreadsheets provided by RESPECT staff, and also data was collected from annual reports.² After the final data was collected, the FSU CEFA research team compiled the data into the following input data categories:

- Employment (Jobs)
- Revenue (Contracts)
- Expenditures

Economic Model and Analysis

The next step in this research study was to conduct the economic impact analysis. FSU CEFA used a well-established analytical tool known as the Impact Analysis for Planning, or IMPLAN^{®3} model. IMPLAN is a widely accepted integrated input-output model that is used extensively by state and local government agencies to measure proposed legislative and other program and policy economic impacts across the private and public sectors. There are several advantages to using IMPLAN:

- It is calibrated to local conditions using a relatively large amount of local county level and state of Florida specific data;
- It is based on a strong theoretical foundation, and;
- It uses a well-researched and accepted applied economics impact assessment methodology supported by many years of use across all regions of the U.S.

The economic impact model used for this analysis was specifically developed for the counties of Florida, and includes 544 sectors, 25 institutional sectors, and most recent dataset⁴ – year 2022 data. IMPLAN's principal advantage is that it may be used to estimate direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts for any static (point-in-time) economic stimulus. IMPLAN uses an economic multiplier approach to estimating impacts. Consistent with standard practice, the direct impacts, as well as the indirect and induced impacts, are calculated for the areas where the RESPECT of Florida program is active.⁵ There is a direct effect that

³ IMPLAN is a regional economic analysis software application that is designed to estimate the impact or ripple effect (specifically backward linkages) of a given economic activity within a specific geographic area through the implementation of its Input-Output model. [Economic Impact Analysis for Planning | IMPLAN](#)

comes from the increase in revenues associated with the change in sales. Next, there is an indirect effect that comes from retailers and others paying their suppliers and employees. Finally, an induced effect comes from the increase in wealth experienced by suppliers and employees of agencies that are partners and others who spend their increased revenues in the local economy. This study evaluates the RESPECT of Florida program's broader economic impacts, measured in terms of economic output, local jobs, and income. Calculations are provided for one category of impact: a) Permanent impacts associated with the ongoing operation of the commercial activities of the program. The total economic impact of the RESPECT of Florida program is the summation of the ongoing annual (permanent) operations of the RESPECT of Florida program.⁶ These RESPECT-related economic activities of the RESPECT program will generate the following:

- Direct Impacts: Relate to: a) the ongoing business activity associated with the agencies associated with the program.
- Indirect Impacts: Will result when agencies directly impacted by the program in turn purchase materials, supplies from or provide services to other firms.
- Induced Impacts. Relate to the consumption and spending of employees that are part of the program that are directly or indirectly affected by the program. These would include all of the goods and services normally associated with household consumption (i.e., housing, retail purchases, local services, etc.).

Economic Impact Results

The total economic impacts of the RESPECT Project are shown in Table 8 and are estimated to be a total of 2,953 jobs, \$130 million in income or wages and about \$343.5 (or \$344) million in total economic output. Individually, the operations and expenses impacts are estimated to total 1,187 jobs, about \$52.3 million in income or wages and nearly \$138 million in total economic output. On an annual (permanent) employment basis, the project is projected to generate 1,766 jobs, nearly \$78 million in income or wages, and about \$206 million in total economic output (sales/revenues/services).

⁶ Commercial operations were defined as being limited to one time sell or service.

Table 8. Economic Impact Analysis Results for the RESPECT Project in 2024\$

Project RESPECT Economic Measure	Economic Output (Sales/Revenues)	Employment	Income
Operations/Expenses	\$138,003,466	1,187	\$52,308,784
Employees	\$205,535,769	1,766	\$77,906,203
Grand Total	\$343,539,235	2,953	\$130,214,987

Table 9. Economic Impact Analysis Separate Results for the RESPECT Project in 2024\$

Employment	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
Operations/Expenses	782	187	218	1,187
Employees	1,164	278	324	1,766
Grand Total	1,946	465	542	2,953

Output	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
Operations/Expenses	\$62,302,525	\$35,383,677	\$40,317,264	\$138,003,466
Employees	\$92,790,404	\$52,698,758	\$60,046,607	\$205,535,769
Grand Total	\$155,092,929	\$88,082,435	\$100,363,871	\$343,539,235

Income	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
Operations/Expenses	\$29,860,272	\$10,446,897	\$12,001,615	\$52,308,784
Employees	\$44,472,463	\$15,559,109	\$17,874,631	\$77,906,203
Grand Total	\$74,332,735	\$26,006,006	\$29,876,246	\$130,214,986

Table 10. Estimated State and Local, and Federal Taxes for the RESPECT Project in \$2024

Project RESPECT Economic Measure	Employment	Operations/ Expenses	Grand Total
State & Local Taxes	\$2,986,719	\$2,005,382	\$4,992,101
Federal Taxes	\$20,138,225	\$13,521,465	\$33,659,690
Grand Total	\$23,124,944	\$15,526,847	\$38,651,791

Annual Return on Investment to State of Florida

The annual benefits within the Florida economy are defined as the economic impacts resulting from the annual state investment in the RESPECT Program, and the economic activity brought into Florida (via contracts and grants, government and private sponsors, fees/services, and other external sources), resulting in the following Benefit-Cost (B/C) Ratio of 5.47. The results of the economic analysis indicate that the RESPECT Program provides a substantive rate of return on the investments made by the state of Florida. The economic benefits include large additions to employment, economic output, personal income, and tax revenues.

- Benefit to the state = \$343,539,235 (or \$344 million)
- Cost of the state investment = \$62,825,679 (or \$63 million)
- Thus, for every dollar of state money invested in the RESPECT Program, \$5.47 (or \$5.50) is generated by the RESPECT Program in economic activity for the State of Florida.

Regional Annual Economic Impacts of the RESPECT Program

The RESPECT Program staff provided data by RESPECT regions. The seven regions are categorized by similar county breakouts as the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT)⁷.

⁷ See: <https://www.fdot.gov/agencyresources/districts/index.shtm>

District 1: Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Manatee, Okeechobee, Polk and Sarasota counties

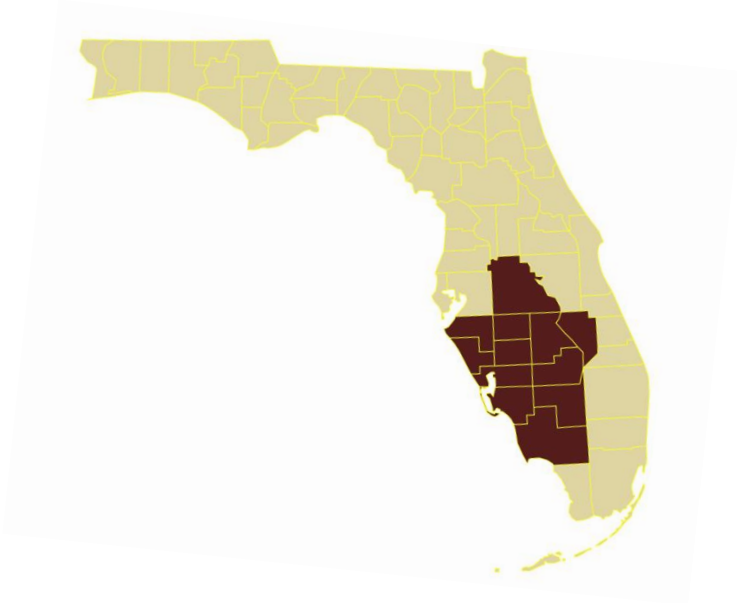


Figure 5. District 1 for the Florida RESPECT Program

District 2: Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Suwannee, Taylor and Union counties

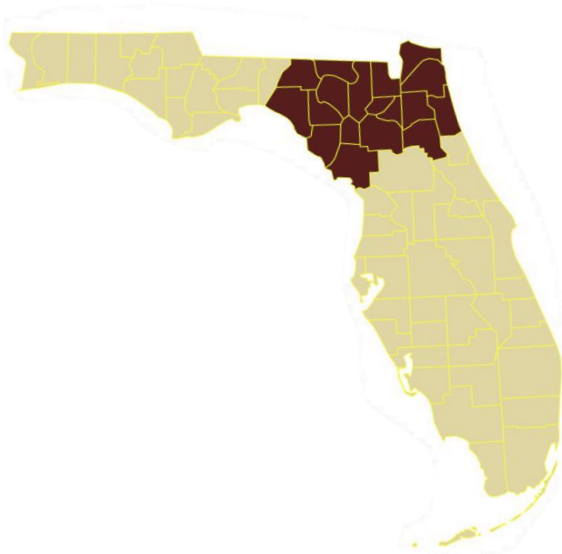


Figure 6. District 2 for the Florida RESPECT Program

District 3: Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington counties

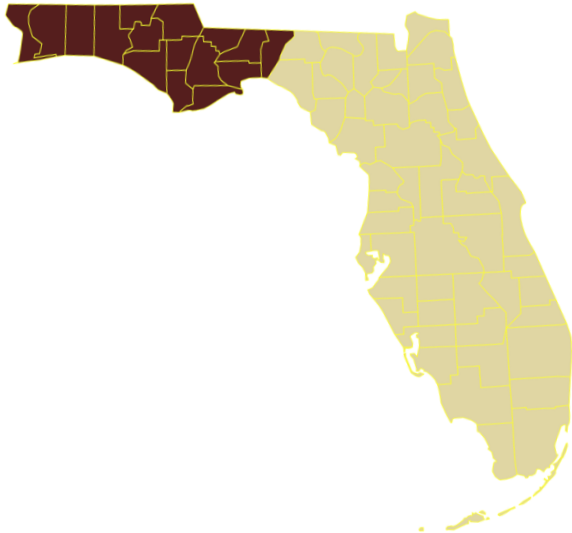


Figure 7. District 3 for the Florida RESPECT Program

District 4: Broward, Indian River, Martin, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie counties



Figure 8. District 4 for the Florida RESPECT Program

District 5: Brevard, Flagler, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia counties

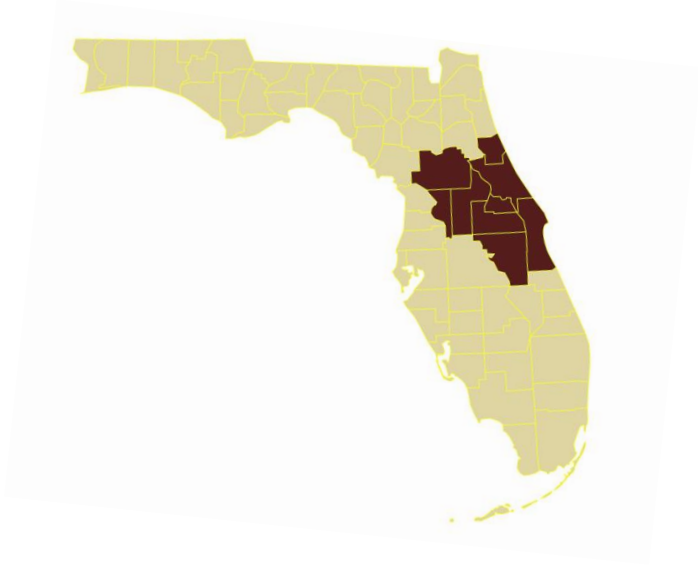


Figure 9. District 5 for the Florida RESPECT Program

District 6: Miami-Dade and Monroe counties



Figure 10. District 6 for the Florida RESPECT Program

District 7: Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties



Figure 11. District 7 for the Florida RESPECT Program

Table 9. Economic Impact Analysis Results for the RESPECT Project

Project RESPECT (Regions)	Economic Output (Sales/Revenues)	Employment	Income
Economic Measure			
District 1	\$2,143,814	20	\$916,841
District 2	\$67,612,798	613	\$25,613,367
District 3	\$52,919,186	524	\$19,924,885
District 4	\$13,970,929	126	\$5,628,494
District 5	\$131,732,912	1,196	\$51,248,386
District 6	\$21,320,594	208	\$7,837,516
District 7	\$20,009,409	172	\$7,853,585

The RESPECT Project's economic impact varies across its seven districts. Table 9 shows District 5 leading in job creation with an estimated 1,196 jobs, followed by Districts 2 and 3, at 613 and 524 jobs, respectively. Employment impact steadily declines through Districts 6 (208 jobs), 7 (172 jobs), and 4 (126 jobs), reaching its lowest in District 1, with only 20 jobs.

A similar trend emerges relating to income generation. District 5 again takes the top spot with an estimated impact of \$51.2 million, followed by Districts 2 and 3, at \$25.6 million and \$20 million, respectively. The Income impact continues to decrease through Districts 7 (\$7.9 million), 6 (\$7.8 million), and 4 (\$5.6 million), with District 1 registering the lowest at \$917,000.

The same pattern holds true for economic output (sales/revenues/services). District 5 represents the highest output at \$131.7 million, while District 1, with only one participating agency, has the lowest output, at \$2.1 million. Likewise, Districts 2 and 3 take the second and third top spots (with \$67.6 million and \$53 million, respectively) in terms of economic output. Thus, in summary, District 5 has a consistently higher economic impact while District 1 has a consistently lower economic impact, across all economic indicators.

Conclusions

The RESPECT Program of Florida plays a substantive role as an economic engine for the state. The project has created 2,953 jobs, with 1,946 direct positions and an additional 1,007 jobs generated as indirect impacts. This translates to a powerful \$155 million boost in economic output directly linked to RESPECT's business activity. But the impact ripples outward, with the total annual economic output for Florida topping a projected \$344 million.

The impact goes beyond immediate numbers. Studies of similar programs across the U.S. highlight the ripple effect they create. Local economies thrive from the influx of jobs generated by service and product sales. Moreover, programs like RESPECT can demonstrably improve the quality of life for people with disabilities, fostering social inclusion, equality, and a reduction in discrimination.

In conclusion, the RESPECT Program isn't solely about social good – it's also a catalyst for economic growth. Not only will Florida's economy benefit directly from the program's operations and employment revenues, but surrounding businesses can expect a boom as well. At the current rate, the development and growth of RESPECT will continue to create a web of opportunity, generating jobs and prosperity for the state. The RESPECT Program is poised to be a transformative force for Florida's economic and social landscape.

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