



WORK IN THE CLOUD LIVE IN THE SUN™

2025

GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE

# STATE OF TECH REPORT

BY SOUTH FLORIDA TECHGATEWAY



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

04 LETTER FROM THE TECHGATEWAY  
FOUNDER, CHAIR AND FACILITATOR

06 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR  
BY JEFF ZBAR

09 TOP INVESTMENTS

12 EMPLOYERS, EDUCATORS  
BUILD NEXT-GEN WORKFORCE

14 SOUTH FLORIDA'S  
TECH + LIFESTYLE HOME

*Photo location provided by Pompano Beach-based 1Print, the world's first 3D concrete printing infrastructure and construction company.*



A REGIONAL \$29.5 BILLION  
TECHGATEWAY

16

EPI-PAWS: ESTIMATING  
DOG YEARS — FOR REAL

19

TECH BRINGS MUSEUMS  
TO DIGITAL LIFE

20

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## WHAT IS TECHGATEWAY?

TechGateway is South Florida - the technology lifestyle destination. For entrepreneurs, employers and employees, educators, tech evangelists and anyone innovating here, "TechGateway" reflects innovation across a tri-county region spanning from Fort Lauderdale south to Miami and north to the Palm Beaches. This regional initiative, spearheaded by the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, is driven by the businesses, organizations and talent transforming our tech ecosystem. When you read "TechGateway," think South Florida tech, where innovators Work in the Cloud. Live in the Sun.™



# LETTER FROM THE TECHGATEWAY FOUNDER, CHAIR AND FACILITATOR

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BY DAVID CODDINGTON, JACOB RUYTENBEEK AND RANDEE DEICH

Anyone can be impressed with the million-dollar, even billion-dollar, technology acquisitions that have earned headlines throughout Greater Fort Lauderdale and established its bona fides as a tech destination known as the “TechGateway.”

A short list of companies would include Citrix (\$16.5 billion), Chewy (\$3 billion), eBuilder (\$500 million), and countless other transactions that may not have registered such lofty values but were successful just the same.

That’s not including the locally grown tech and tech-centric firms still operating here, including MagicLeap, Motorola, UKG, SiriusXM, and Hotwire Communications.

Each high-figure deal started with the proverbial notes on a scrap of paper. By that measure, Greater Fort Lauderdale is home to phenomenal success stories.

Those are the stories we’re pursuing in this edition of the annual TechGateway State of Tech Report. Past issues have explored our rich tech history; those phenomenal exits; the educators and collaborators who have backed our successes; and the venture firms, financiers and partners who’ve invested in and bankrolled the next great innovation. Last year, we dove into the blue economy to see how tech and South Florida’s marine environment has launched countless firms exploring resilience and sustainability.

With this issue, we’re looking younger. We’re talking to the younger companies staking their claim. From new-launch to growth stage, these firms epitomize the startup spirit that permeates the regional technology marketplace.

These are growing players on the cusp of great opportunity. Consider those in the blue and green sustainability space. With Morgan Stanley predicting investment potential topping \$3 trillion and 40 million jobs worldwide in the coming decades, sustainable and resilient solutions create “an opportunity to make money and take care of the environment at the same time,” says Katherine O’Fallon, executive director with the Marine Research Hub, a nexus of the state’s Florida’s blue economy.

The attributes which have lured businesses here for years - our favorable regulatory and tax-friendly business climate, a hemispheric location coined as “gateway to the Americas,” even proximity to MI1, the massive South Florida-based “Network Access Point” that serves as one of the world’s largest Internet exchange points and data centers, it’s little wonder thousands of entrepreneurs have arrived here.

Highly collaborative and creatively connected, innovators and investors alike have found in the region a respected destination whose vibrancy is primed for continued growth, says Kelley Shanley, a long-time area



*By leveraging Florida’s economic development, we drive economic opportunities, cultivate a resilient workforce, and accelerate market-ready solutions to combat real threats from climate events and rising sea levels, ensuring the protection of our coastlines.*

**–FREDRIK WANNIUS**

CO-FOUNDER, 1PRINT

leader and interim executive director of the Alan B. Levan I NSU Broward Center of Innovation.

“It’s clear that the value of assisting startups is not lost on those who understand economic development and policy,” he said. “There is an ambitious and collaborative community that is truly here to help you succeed.”

These efforts touch every corner of the market. Along with TechGateway, which sponsors this report, the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance in Fiscal Year 2024 (October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024), assisted more than 150 tech and non-tech companies relocate to or expand here. Some 60 local businesses were assisted, resulting in 170 retained jobs. During the same period, the Alliance assisted 11 companies in establishing new and/or expanding existing operations in Broward County; total capital investment of these companies is \$164,600,000, with a total of 1,060 new direct jobs to be created over a period of three years.

Such collaboration has helped attract and retain existing businesses, and launch the next great idea - right here in Greater Fort Lauderdale.

This Report reflects such collaboration. It was created with the support of our partners — the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance’s CEO Council, Nova Southeastern University, the Broward Workshop, FPL and Wells Fargo.

Each sees the promise the county and TechGateway region brings to technology companies big and small: the opportunity to “Work in the Cloud. Live in the Sun™.” That’s a benefit for a business of any size.



**DAVID CODDINGTON**

Senior Vice President of Business Development, Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance and Founder of The South Florida TechGateway



**JACOB RUYTENBEEK**

Founder and CEO SailPlan, Founder of Founding Blue, Chair of The South Florida TechGateway



**RANDEE DEICH**

Director of Talent Attraction and Education, Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance and Facilitator of The South Florida TechGateway



# FROM LAUNCH TO GROWTH

## *How Greater Fort Lauderdale Nurtures Next-Gen Tech*

BY JEFF ZBAR

Every successful company began as an idea in an innovator's mind - that proverbial idea scratched out on a napkin or tablet that, through sweat, ambition and funding, found its place in the market.

Greater Fort Lauderdale is home to countless tech firms that fit that description. They not only were created and grown here, their exits or mergers earned global headlines. What's more, these companies laid the foundation for those that came later.

For every UKG, which began in 1990 as Ultimate Software before its 2020 merger with Kronos created a \$22 billion firm, there's a Cloudhesive. The firm was founded in 2014 and today leverages the public cloud ecosystem through consulting and next-generation managed services.

For every Chewy.com, which enjoyed a \$3.35 billion acquisition by PetSmart in 2017, there's a Carbon Limit. Founded in 2021, the climate tech company is solidifying the commercialization of concrete solutions for a more sustainable built environment.

The result has been the development of this innovation-friendly tech ecosystem, followed by venture capitalists and other investors, as well as the growing wave of awareness on the climate, sustainability and resilience. Or, as Tim Sperry, founder and CEO of Carbon Limit,

observed, "all the pieces of the pie started to come together."

That's the snapshot of Greater Fort Lauderdale and the region's technology ecosystem, what's been coined the South Florida TechGateway." By any measure, the South Florida region - from Fort Lauderdale south to Miami-Dade County and north to Palm Beach County - today is highly ranked among technology marketplaces. Statewide, Florida ranks among the nation's highest number of tech firms and largest tech product exporters.

The South Florida region boasts over 11,000 tech firms and is a top 50 U.S. tech talent market in the U.S. For employers, that's a rich talent pool. The estimated 136,000 net information and communications technology industry workers include both tech occupation and tech industry jobs, notes the 2024 CompTIA State of Tech Workforce report. This was forecast to be up about 3,700 jobs over 2023. In all, tech employment accounts for \$29.5 billion in economic impact.

The region's tech workforce is highly diverse, consisting of Millennial / Gen Z (58%), women (27%), Hispanics (26%) and African Americans (12%).

### **TECH HERE IMPACTS DAILY LIFE**

South Florida's IT history touches every part of daily life. It was home to the first IBM personal



computer and Simon, Motorola's first smartphone. The innovation labs of SiriusXM Radio are based here. Cloud and collaboration leader Citrix, founded by IBM veterans, in 2022 was acquired for \$16.5 billion in an all-cash transaction.

This speaks to the diversity of tech innovations. The market is home to biotech and surgical robots, marine tech and air conditioning tech, said Christopher Leonard, CEO of Velocity Solutions and co-chairman of the Broward Workshop Tech Committee.

"One of the most amazing things about the technology scene in South Florida is the diversity in types of tech businesses," Leonard said. "Broward Workshop is proud to be a catalyst to continue to spur innovation, proudly supporting the South Florida Tech Hub and the Alan B. Levan | NSU Broward Center of Innovation, which are tremendous resources to grow tech in this community."

Such support from area colleges and universities gives the region's employers and talent custom certificates to graduate degree programs across the IT spectrum. A UKG program with Broward College allows students to participate in a semester-long course to receive a UKG Ready Human Capital Management Time and Labor Management Certification. UKG's broader Empower U program aims to expose diverse students to STEM and professional development education and opportunities.

"South Florida's economy has experienced remarkable growth in recent years, fueled by a combination

of factors including a favorable business environment, a desirable lifestyle, and a growing technology ecosystem," said Ceri Daniels, VP of Global Talent Acquisition at UKG, which employs over 1,000 tech professionals. "This growth has attracted major employers in the technology sector, adding to an already deep market of highly skilled talent in South Florida."

### A GROWING CAREER CENTER

No market is more dynamic in its variety of award-winning startups. Enchanted Wave specializes in wearable EEG technology and innovative human-machine interactions for advanced research in the fields of cognitive science, sports performance, and sleep/dream studies. The company won the South Florida Innovation Day pitch competition at the Levan Center and is fast-tracked into the 2025 eMerge Americas tech conference, said Founder Cheng Qian.

Broward native and entrepreneur Aurelia Edwards' Nailstry uses AI and a smartphone camera to deliver virtual fingernail sizing technology, providing users the perfect size for their press-on nails. The online marketplace then matches the dimensions to an online marketplace of over 300 designers across the nation.

The company was founded in 2019. The app launched in 2020. In 2022, she joined the Levan Center, participated in the accelerator program, worked with the Venture Mentoring Team, the Small Business Development Center and the Broward County Office of Economic and Small Business for guidance. Today, her



*I am impressed by the vibrancy of the innovation/tech ecosystem in South Florida. It's clear that the value of assisting startups is not lost on those who understand economic development and policy. There is an ambitious and collaborative community that is truly here to help you succeed."*



**– KELLEY SHANLEY**  
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
ALAN B. LEVAN | NSU BROWARD  
CENTER OF INNOVATION





*South Florida Innovation Day links innovation, technology and entrepreneurship across the region*

company is growing globally - thanks to South Florida's enviable geography at the hub of the Americas and world.

**OPPORTUNITIES BEGET OPPORTUNITIES**

"As the Levan Center of Innovation continues to contribute to the growth of the South Florida innovation ecosystem by assisting entrepreneurs with scaling their startups, Greater Fort Lauderdale and South Florida will see ongoing opportunities for entrepreneurs to build their businesses in South Florida," said Jaap Donath, assistant executive director of programs with the Levan Center. "Local resources for startups to be successful continue to grow, including available talent, investment funding, and technical expertise."

Added Broward Workshop Tech Committee Co-Chair Manish Hirapara, CEO of Peak Activity, this reflects a "great transformation of old versus new" currently underway.

The winners in the "new" are the geographies that are supporting the progress we are making in technology and innovation. This reflects the promise of the South Florida TechGateway.

"From funding to workforce development, the Greater Fort Lauderdale area is firing on all cylinders," he said. "We are seeing an influx of leaders, companies, and a rising support ecosystem unfurl before our eyes. The next five to 10 years look incredibly promising, as the journey is just beginning."



All articles by Jeff Zbar. The freelance business and marketing writer can be reached at [jeff@jeffzbar.com](mailto:jeff@jeffzbar.com).

**“** *The region's emphasis on fostering innovation, nurturing startups, and building strategic partnerships creates a fertile ground for groundbreaking advancements. With a strong commitment to cultivating a skilled workforce and embracing forward-thinking solutions, Fort Lauderdale is well-positioned to lead in the next wave of technological transformation.* **”**



**– GREG NORDONE**  
PRESIDENT / CEO, GREYSON TECHNOLOGY;  
CO-CHAIR, BROWARD WORKSHOP TECH COMMITTEE





# NUMBERS TELL TECHNOLOGY'S TALE

## U.S. & STATE INVESTMENT

More than

**\$287.5B**

capital invested in the U.S. in 2024.

Florida ranked #6 in the U.S., with

**\$8.1B**

capital invested in the region in 2024.

Florida ranked #5, with

**713**

deals in Florida in 2024.

The average capital invest per deal in Florida in 2024 was

**11.3M**

up 36% from the \$8.3M average in 2023

## SOUTH FLORIDA METRO INVESTMENT

Ranked #1, based on capital invested, with

**409**

deals across the tri-county region (Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties) in 2024.

**\$6.0B**

invested in the region, account for nearly 3 out of 4 dollars (74.4%) invested in the state of Florida.

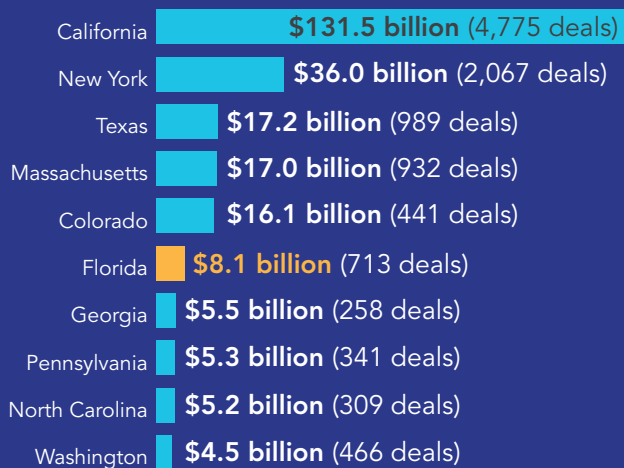
South Florida's capital investment is

**10x**

the amount invested in the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater metro (\$580 million) — the second largest metro area in the state.

## STATES WITH HIGHEST CAPITAL INVESTMENT\*

Ranked by capital invested (2024)



## FLORIDA METROS WITH HIGHEST CAPITAL INVESTMENT\*

Ranked by capital invested (2024)



\*Capital raised through/counts of Venture Capital, PE Growth/Expansion and Equity Crowdfunding rounds  
Source: PitchBook Data, Inc. data as of 01/09/2025, GFLA Research

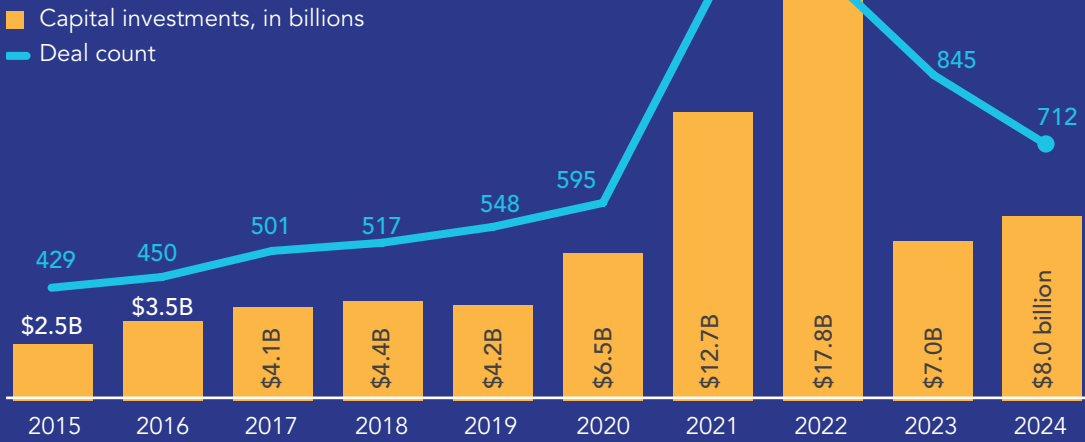
# CAPITAL INVESTMENTS TRENDS

## CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND TOTAL DEALS, FLORIDA

In 2024, Venture Capital investment overall increased \$69.5 Billion or 32% in the U.S going from \$218B in 2023 down to \$287.6B in 2024.

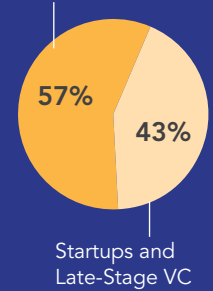
Compared to 2019, pre-pandemic investment, Florida's capital investment increased \$38.5B or 91% from \$4.2B to \$8.1B, growing faster than the U.S growth of 49%.

### DEAL ACTIVITY<sup>1</sup> FOR FLORIDA BY YEAR



## 2024 FLORIDA CAPITAL INVESTMENT

PE Growth/Expansion deals

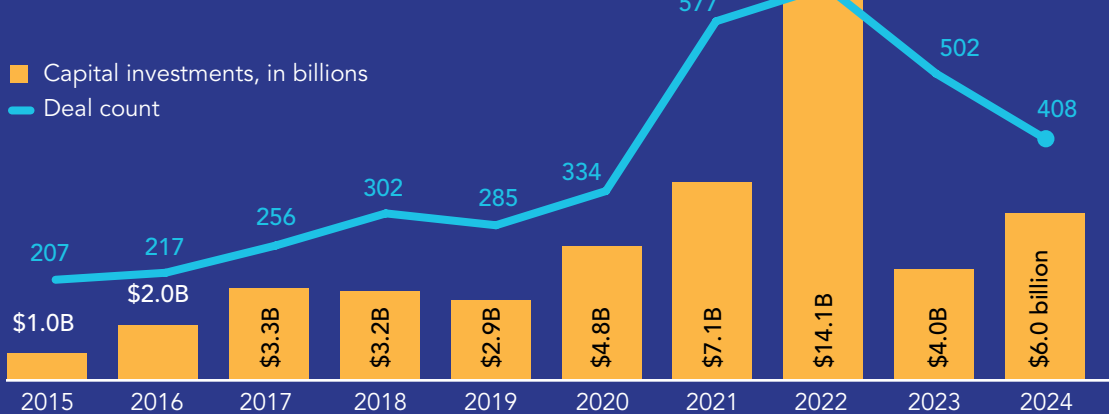


In 2024, Private Equity Growth/Expansion investment represented 57% of the total investment in the state of Florida, a nearly 10 percentage points growth compared to the previous year share.

## CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND DEALS, SOUTH FLORIDA

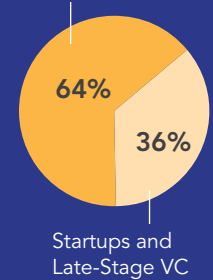
In 2024, Venture capital investment in South Florida experienced an increase of \$2B or 51% compared to 2023. South Florida remains #1 metro in the state with \$6 billion invested accounting for more than 74% of the total capital invested in Florida in 2024.

### DEAL ACTIVITY<sup>1</sup> FOR SOUTH FLORIDA BY YEAR



## 2024 SOUTH FLORIDA CAPITAL INVESTMENT

PE Growth/Expansion deals



In 2024, the Private Equity Growth/Expansion investment increased by \$2B year over year, majority represented by one deal valued at \$1.4B. PE Growth/Expansion Investment share went from 47% in 2023 to 64% in 2024.

<sup>1</sup>Capital raised through/counts of Venture Capital, PE Growth/Expansion and Equity Crowdfunding rounds

Source: PitchBook Data, Inc. data as of 01/09/2025, GFLA Research

# TOP BROWARD COUNTY DEALS AND EXITS BASED ON CAPITAL INVESTED

## TOP DEALS<sup>1</sup> IN BROWARD COUNTY, FL IN 2024

COMPANIES	LAST FINANCING DATE	LAST FINANCING SIZE (USD M)	LAST FINANCING DEAL TYPE	HQ LOCATION	INDUSTRY/VERTICAL
Orthopedic Care Partners	05-Dec-2024	543.00	PE Growth/Expansion	Fort Lauderdale	Healthcare
IntelePeer	19-Jul-2024	140.00	PE Growth/Expansion	Dania Beach	IT/AI & Machine Learning
Akumin	06-Feb-2024	130.00	PE Growth/Expansion	Plantation	Healthcare/Life Sciences
Syncromune	16-Dec-2024	100.00	Early Stage VC	Fort Lauderdale	HealthTech/BioTech/Life Sciences
DataCore	29-May-2024	60.00	PE Growth/Expansion	Fort Lauderdale	IT/Big Data/SaaS
Upwards	26-Jan-2024	21.00	Later Stage VC	Coral Springs	Media/HR Tech
SynthBee	16-Oct-2024	20.00	Seed Round	Fort Lauderdale	IT/AI & Machine Learning
Yoga Joint	24-Oct-2024	12.00	Equity Crowdfunding	Sunrise	LOHAS & Wellness
N2me TV	25-Jul-2024	11.43	Later Stage VC	Fort Lauderdale	IT/CloudTech/Entertainment Software
Blue Horizon Innovations	16-Jan-2024	10.00	Later Stage VC	Coconut Creek	CleanTech/ClimateTech
BORED SLOT	10-Apr-2024	10.00	Early Stage VC	Sunrise	IT/Cryptocurrency/Blockchain
ScratchMobile	12-Nov-2024	9.31	Seed Round	Fort Lauderdale	IT/Gaming/Robotics & Drones
Gemini Sports Analytics	15-Jun-2024	9.00	Early Stage VC	Pompano Beach	IT/AI & Machine Learning
InNeuroCo	21-Jun-2024	8.18	Later Stage VC	Pembroke Pines	Healthcare/LOHAS & Wellness/Surgical Devices
Odyssey Elixir	12-Feb-2024	6.00	Early Stage VC	Margate	E-Commerce/Manufacturing
Apolo	09-Dec-2024	5.85	Later Stage VC	Fort Lauderdale	IT/Business/Productivity Software
Zulu Pods	01-Mar/ 13-May-2024	5.30	Seed Round/ Early Stage VC	Fort Lauderdale	Aerospace & Defense/Robotics & Drones
Boatsetter	13-Aug-2024	5.00	Later Stage VC	Fort Lauderdale	Marine
Quantinium	27-Mar-2024	4.00	Early Stage VC	Fort Lauderdale	IT/FinTech
4BiddenKnowledge TV	31-Oct-2024	3.51	Equity Crowdfunding	Weston	Media
GBI	12-Nov-2024	3.00	PE Growth/Expansion	Plantation	Healthcare/Biotechnology/ Life Sciences
Nautical Ventures	12-Jan-2024	2.09	Seed Round	Fort Lauderdale	Consumer Products and Services (B2C)
Truth Arts	10-Apr-2024	1.24	Equity Crowdfunding	Hollywood	IT/FinTech
Control Medical Technology	20-Aug-2024	1.02	Later Stage VC	Hallandale	Healthcare/Oncology/Surgical Devices
Doroni	15-Oct-2024	0.84	Equity Crowdfunding	Pompano Beach	Air/Manufacturing/Robotics & Drones

## TOP EXITS<sup>2</sup> IN BROWARD COUNTY, FL IN 2024

COMPANIES	EXIT DATE	EXIT SIZE (USD M)	EXIT TYPE	CITY	INDUSTRY/VERTICAL
Voyce (Medical Interpretation Platform)	19-Aug-2024	NA	Buyout/LBO	Sunrise	IT/HealthTech
Lux Speed	12-Jun-2024	NA	Buyout/LBO	Fort Lauderdale	IT/Communications & Networking
Wave Dental Professionals	01-May-2024	NA	Merger/Acquisition	Sunrise	TMT/Healthcare
Odds On Compliance	24-Apr-2024	NA	Merger/Acquisition	Parkland	SaaS/Legal Services
Identifid	03-Apr-2024	NA	Merger/Acquisition	Miramar	IT/AI & Machine Learning
Automated HealthCare Solutions	22-Feb-2024	NA	Merger/Acquisition	Sunrise	TMT/SaaS/HealthTech

<sup>1</sup>Capital raised through/counts of Venture Capital, PE Growth/Expansion and Equity Crowdfunding rounds

<sup>2</sup>Exits from Venture Capital, PE Growth/Expansion and Equity Crowdfunding rounds, by exit size

Source: PitchBook Data, Inc. data as of 01/09/2025, GFLA Research

# EMPLOYERS, EDUCATORS BUILDING NEXT-GEN WORKFORCE

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Not content to hope the 21st Century welcomes tomorrow's workers, area employers and educators are building a future-ready workforce today. Institutions such as Nova Southeastern University, Broward College, Florida Atlantic University, Keiser University, and more than two dozen other regional colleges, universities and workforce development organizations are collaborating to prepare employees for tech and STEM careers.

Introductions start at an early age. At the A-rated Broward County Public Schools' annual TechGateway Day, middle and high school Career and Technical Education students explore dynamic, high-demand and high-paying tech jobs. This is accomplished through direct interaction with industry leaders shaping the region's future, said Maria Formoso, Director of Career, Technical, Adult and Community Education at Broward County Public Schools.

"The TechGateway maps highlight the abundance of local opportunities, inspiring students to envision themselves as part of South Florida's thriving tech landscape," she said. By working with district leaders, maps are in classrooms across Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. "This initiative underscored the power of partnerships, like the one with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, in preparing the next generation for success."

Other organizations are helping prepare future tech workers. The nonprofit Crockett Foundation, which focuses on the tech workforce, hosts the Digital Explorers program. It includes AI literacy, cybersecurity basics, and tech entrepreneurship. These enhancements reflect the evolving demands of the workforce and our commitment to fostering innovation, the foundation's founder and President Henri Crockett said.

"What gives me the greatest confidence is witnessing our alumni excel in cutting-edge fields and our CIX Workshop partnerships with organizations like Microsoft and HCA Healthcare, FPL, Broward Sheriff's Department, which ensure students gain real-world experience," he said. "By combining emerging technology training with entrepreneurial mindsets, our students don't just adapt to change—they drive it. Their success is a testament to the power of early, equitable access to tech education in fostering long-term economic growth."

The effort has been recognized beyond South Florida. TechGateway and the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance's partnerships with in- and out-of-state universities showcase the careers available here. As such, South Florida is blossoming as a welcoming destination for technology careers, said Anna Lombard, Career Services Coordinator with the Rochester Institute of Technology. The TechGateway region's recognition as

Software, Programmers, Web



IT Support Specialist and Repair Technicians



Network, Cloud Engineers, Architects, Admin



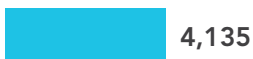
Cybersecurity and Systems Engineers



Database, Data Science, Analytics and CS



Emerging Tech, IT Project Management, and Other



## LEADING TECH OCCUPATIONS

South Florida is on the leading edge of tech's top careers.

Source: CompTIA State of Tech Workforce 2024

a Climate-Ready Tech hub under the Biden-Harris Administration's Tech Hubs Program aligns with RIT's values, where sustainability and innovation go hand in hand, Lombard said.

"This vibrant ecosystem not only promotes growth in the tech sector but also fosters a sense of community among graduates eager to make a positive impact," she said.

"South Florida offers a unique blend of opportunities and a supportive atmosphere, making it an exciting place for emerging tech professionals to thrive."

Added Lenny Chesal, Chief Evangelist with IM Data Centers, which recently expanded to 75,000 square feet and is building out modular data centers for two universities and a high-profile government agency for their respective supercomputer centers.

"A commitment to workforce development, supported by universities and tech hubs, ensures a skilled, future-ready talent pipeline. This synergy between innovation, funding, and education positions Fort Lauderdale and South Florida as rising leaders in technology and a catalyst for long-term economic growth."

**“** *This vibrant ecosystem not only promotes growth in the tech sector, but also fosters a sense of community among graduates eager to make a positive impact.* **”**

– ANNA LOMBARD  
CAREER SERVICES COORDINATOR

**RIT** | Rochester Institute of Technology

# SOUTH FLORIDA'S TECH + LIFESTYLE HOME

Across Greater Fort Lauderdale and South Florida, developers are building Class A office space and luxury and workforce housing to meet TechGateway's growing needs.

It can be seen across the area's different development sectors. Greater Fort Lauderdale's median residential home sale price of \$450,000 was up 6.4% year-over-year. The Live Local Act, passed in 2023 and amended in May 2024, has encouraged developers to build more affordable workforce housing.

In downtown Fort Lauderdale alone, some 20,000 apartments and condos are planned to meet the needs of a population topping 26,000 people - up over 35% since 2020, notes a report from the Fort Lauderdale Downtown Development Authority. The growth is projected to top 28.1% between 2024 and 2028, surpassing that of the downtown areas of West Palm Beach (24.6%), Miami (18.9%), and Tampa (15%), the report notes.

Work lives are being reimagined. In the heart of FlaglerVillage, the rising T3 FATVillage mixed-use live-work-play development is committed to lifestyle. Nestled in the vibrant arts community and located near the Brightline transit station, T3 will maximize the region's tech infrastructure and deliver transformative, mixed-use destinations that signify the tech gateway's urban revitalization.

"Real estate drives regional growth by fostering vibrant communities and desirable environments for residents and businesses," said Cristina Jolley, with Blanca Commercial Real Estate.

"To support South Florida's continued evolution, it is crucial to deliver cutting-edge office spaces, like T3 FAT Village, that meet the demands of innovative companies," she said. "South Florida thrives through synergy across all real estate asset classes."



*Real estate drives regional growth by fostering vibrant communities and desirable environments for residents and businesses."*



– CRISTINA JOLLEY  
BLANCA COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE



# A MAGIC LEAP FOR INNOVATION

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Plantation-based Magic Leap has been named among world's top 100 innovative companies by LexisNexis. Founded in 2010 as a consumer-focused augmented reality provider, today its B2B-focused Magic Leap 2 device serves health care, defense and manufacturing. The only Florida-based business on the list, it holds over 850 patent families and has raised some \$3.5 billion since its debut.



# A REGIONAL \$29.5 BILLION TECHGATEWAY

Greater Fort Lauderdale is the nexus of a massive technology hub. Stretching 126 miles along the Atlantic coast, “TechGateway” has an estimated \$29.5 billion direct economic impact and employs 136,000 high-wage workers, notes CompTIA. Its successes include Citrix, Chewy.com, UKG and Trimble (formerly eBuilder), as well as a host of startups across the fintech, healthtech and general tech marketplace.

Below are snapshots of some of the region’s established and emerging players - their vision, their funding, and their success.

## Blue Frontier

When Daniel Betts founded Blue Frontier from the garage of his suburban Broward home in 2017, he was asked, “why launch in Florida?”

After all, there was a startup atmosphere, but it was not considered a major center of science-based tech firms. Now, with \$16.9 million in its second series A funding, from Florida Opportunity Fund and a large local industrial backer, Betts has seen the market change.

Companies like his, which is commercializing packaged and sustainable Liquid Desiccant-Enhanced Dedicated Outdoor Air System (LD-DOAS) that improves moisture removal efficiency, energy storage, and digital twin reliability in a single packaged product, are pushing



*Blue Frontier is creating a sustainable planet by making buildings flexible, efficient, healthy, and comfortable.*

the bounds of energy tech.

It helps that some can access talent from NASA and the Department of Defense along to the north.

“You’d be surprised at the amount of invention and technology that has been developed quietly in the state,” he says, “It’s just now being recognized by venture capitalists.”





## Carbon Limit Co.

When Tim Sperry founded the climate tech firm in 2021, he saw a way to turn ubiquitous concrete into the foundation of a sustainable built environment. Carbon Limit's CaptureCrete® combines direct air capture (DAC) technology with CO<sub>2</sub> mineralization.

Today, cement, concrete and driveway paver manufacturers can utilize the carbon-capture technology to both reduce concrete's carbon footprint and tackle existing emissions by capturing CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and permanently storing it into the concrete.

It also generates high quality carbon credits of 1000+ year permanence. The concept was nurtured at Florida Atlantic University's TechRunway, collaborates with engineers from the University of Miami, and has been supported by Google's Climate Change Accelerator, and backed by investors locally and with municipal and Department of Defense grants, Sperry has watched as the climate tech space has flourished around him.

"We're ground zero for being exposed to the environment," he said. "There's a deep understanding of the need for resilience and sustainability."



*Carbon Limit partners with industry leaders to debut heat crisis-combating concrete additive.*

## Cloudhesive

Headquartered in Fort Lauderdale, Cloudhesive is an Amazon Premier Partner and an Amazon Managed Services Partner that was founded in 2014 by veterans in the cloud technology space.

The company's 200 employees help customers adapt and transform their organizations by leveraging the power of the public cloud ecosystem through consulting and next-generation managed services.

Its ConnectPath CX CCaaS platform, and next-generation managed services, focus on operational excellence, security, reliability, Generative AI, and application optimization. With South Florida as a hemispheric gateway, Cloudhesive's expanded Latin American presence includes offices in Santiago, Chile; Bogota, Colombia; and Buenos Aires, Argentina.



*CloudHesive offers AWS cloud solutions and managed services to empower your business with migrations, cloud security, and innovation.*

## 1Print

Located in Florida, 1Print thrives within the innovative ecosystem fostered by the South Florida Climate Ready Tech Hub. This visionary initiative aims to globally lead the commercialization of resilience technology. We drive economic opportunities, cultivate a resilient workforce, and accelerate market-ready solutions to climate events and rising sea levels, ensuring the protection of our coastlines.



## Sailplan

SailPlan is the data platform for maritime operations and efficiency. Its maritime analytics, efficiency, and sustainability application enables shipowners, fleet operators, ship managers, and governments to unlock strategic business outcomes powered by rich fleet data.

The company was founded in 2021 by Broward native, former marine technician and Air Force and SpaceX contractor Jacob Ruytenbeek.



*SailPlan's data platform for maritime operations and efficiency unlocks strategic business outcomes powered by rich fleet data.*

His application "connects the seas to the cloud," taking high resolution data from ships, putting it in the cloud, then providing customers with "analytical tools to open non-obvious insights," he said.

Shipping and cruise companies can optimize itineraries, improve efficiency based on hull design and current conditions, or move ports to improve carbon goals - and reduce "severely over reported" carbon emissions and related taxes. "That can be millions of dollars in CO2 reporting," he says. The company's location just west of Port Everglades keeps it close to the sector it serves. "We could have done this anywhere. But being in South Florida, we're close to our key groups - cruises and shipping."

## Building bonds in the blue economy

Jacob Ruytenbeek created Founding Blue to provide networking, mentorship, and education to founders across Florida.

He knows the need. As the founder of SailPlan, which helps the cruise and shipping sectors improve CO2 reporting and efficiencies, Ruytenbeek realized early on what's required to build scalable, sustainable bluetech companies, or those involved in resilience and sustainability.

Events have partnered with the Marine Industries Association of South Florida, bringing in speakers from across tech, the U.S. Navy and the Department of Defense to help founders partner with that sector. Being in South Florida helps bluetech thrive.



*SellersFi offers various financial solutions to thousands of e-commerce sellers.*

## SellersFi

Based in Weston, the global financial technology company provides working capital to help e-commerce merchants to scale easier and faster. From inventory and marketing to product launches, international expansion, and more, thousands of e-commerce sellers, SellersFi funds success. In early 2024, it scored a \$300 million credit facility from Citi and Fasanara Capital to fuel its growth. It was recognized as among South Florida's top-funded AI-powered startups of the year, notes eMerge Americas' 2023 Insight Report.



# EPIPAWS: ESTIMATING DOG YEARS — FOR REAL

Andria Beal was a geneticist developing an age estimation test for dolphins when she realized how knowing the age of a dog could help owners be more responsive to illnesses common to aging.

So she launched pet-tech firm EpiPaws. Especially useful among rescues or shelter pets whose age might be unknown, her Pet Age chronological test can be accurate within about 12 months. With a simple cheek swab, results can help the owner ensure the pet is on age-appropriate food or is getting sufficient exercise, especially as needs change over time. This can also help spot or address age-related illness. The Pet Age test is available for \$120 from Amazon, Tractor Supply and Walmart.

The company incorporated in January 2022 and was bootstrapped through the product's launch. By the time they hit the market in June 2023, the company was making revenue. A local angel saw the product showcased at the eMerge Americas conference and invested. A second investor was a wealthy pet-owner who had used the product. Beal expects profitability early this year.

Along the way, local resources have helped Beal and her husband successfully grow their company. She first took her idea to StartUp FIU at Florida International University, where it was warmly received. She then enrolled in and recently completed FAU TechRunway at Florida Atlantic University. She recently was offered \$250,000 for a 20% stake in her company from venture



*Award-winning EpiPaws provides epigenetic Pet Age Testing with DNA to improve pets' health.*

capitalist Kevin O'Leary during CrocTank, a first-of-its-kind live business pitch event recently hosted at TechRunway with the judges from ABC's show "Shark Tank."

Next up: a biological age test. Likely available this summer, this test will spot age-specific markers to dive deeper into pet needs - and how they may respond to dietary or other changes.

"Getting started, you already hear that Silicon Valley is where you have to go," she said. "I was blown away by the resources we have in South Florida."



# TECH BRINGS MUSEUMS TO DIGITAL LIFE

Doug McGraw is known for bringing the Flagler Arts and Technology (FAT) Village Arts District to life from a downtrodden section of Fort Lauderdale warehouses. Today, the thriving pocket of studios and galleries is being showcased in another format: 3D presentation.

Working with Edward Munoz-Toro, McGraw has created IMX3. The award-winning tech startup uses LiDAR (light detection and ranging) laser sensing to measure distances and create 3D images. IMX3 pulls real life art into the emerging metaverse, allowing users to virtually traverse FAT Village streets and into galleries.

Those online at the same time can interact along the streets, or travel through “portals” to visit an outdoor mural or enter a gallery. Students can take a “field trip” to FAT Village, the Broward County Main Library, the displays at the Fort Lauderdale Hollywood International Airport, or sites of the Broward Cultural Division, or any other participating venue.

Self-funded so far, the web-based solution requires no apps or downloads. Given the possibility to monetize the platform without restrictions, McGraw saw a real business model, beyond preserving the legacy of FAT Village. He’s already in discussions with other venues outside Florida.

“It’s a great way to make art publicly accessible,” said McGraw, whose application also shares the stories behind the art. “What’s cool about public art is the surrounding venue. It’s intrinsic to the story behind it. The metaverse can really bring that story to the users.”





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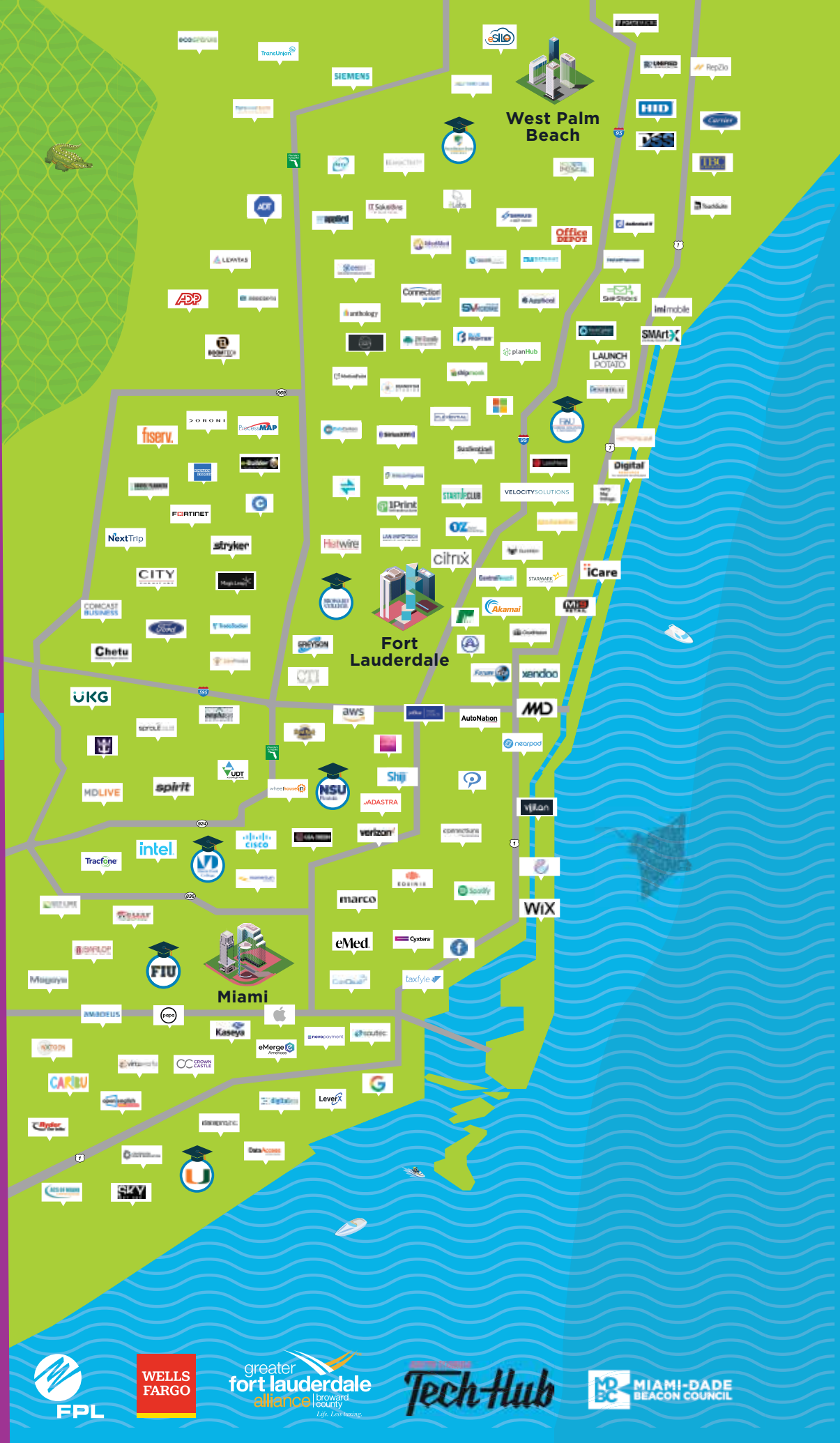
Source: \*2024 CompTIA State of Tech Workforce; LightcastTM, 2024.5

For more information about technology companies, academics and organizations in South Florida visit [TechGateway.org](https://TechGateway.org)



Hologram Welcome Message from David Coddington

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# WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE

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*Greater Fort Lauderdale's tech ecosystem is rapidly growing, fueled by top talent migrating from tech hubs like San Francisco and New York City. This has created a strong network of professionals, bringing diverse perspectives to solve meaningful problems. With AI, blockchain, and biotechnology driving innovation, the region is becoming a major hub of opportunity, attracting investment and creating an environment well-positioned for growth and transformation."*



**- LILLIAN ROBERTS**  
CEO, XENDOO



*Fort Lauderdale is a catalyst for attracting early-stage investors and driving the development of new startup activity in South Florida. I hold this vision in part because the City of Fort Lauderdale sits as a strategic geographic link between its two neighbors Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties, creating a powerful space for collaboration across the tri-county region. At the Fort Lauderdale Tech Meetup alone, we've hosted over 3,500 guests in the past 21 editions, where we've witnessed startups being launched, investments being made, and founders getting access to key decision-makers to scale their ideas."*



**- JULIA LUCIDI**  
FOUNDER TACTICS





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