



Learn. Serve. Lead.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

UF | IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Enhancing the leadership skills of county officials and facilitating innovative thinking and action to enable counties to prosper.



The Institute for County Government enhances the leadership skills of county officials, to facilitate innovative thinking and action by those leaders, and, ultimately to enable counties to prosper as communities in the 21st century.



Learn. Serve. Lead.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Table of Contents

- 01 | BOARD OF DIRECTORS2
- 02 | 2025 MILESTONES4
- 03 | STRATEGIC PLAN AND GUIDANCE ... 6
 - Education 6
 - Specialty Classes 10
 - Studio 67 14
- 04 | GOALS FOR 202616

In response to increasing requests for education programs and technical assistance, the Florida Association of Counties created the Florida Counties Foundation (FCF) in 1990. FCF is a private, non-profit 501(c)3 governed by a Board of Directors which is comprised of county commissioners, county administrators, and county attorneys. In 2018, the Foundation was rebranded as the Institute for County Government (ICG). ICG oversees the content of all the education programs as well as FAC’s Annual Conference and the Innovation and Policy Conference.

01 Board of Directors



**Commissioner
Andy Dance**

CHAIR
Flagler County



**Commissioner
Emma Byrd**

VICE CHAIR
Hendry County



**Commissioner
Michelle Stone**

TREASURER
Marion County



**Commissioner
Susan Adams**

**FAC FIRST VICE
PRESIDENT**
Indian River County



**Commissioner
Rebecca Bays**

Citrus County



**Commissioner
Peggy Choudhry**

Osceola County



**Commissioner
Noey Flores**

Hardee County



Ramon Gavarrete

Alachua County



Laurie Humer

Highlands County



**Commissioner
Ricky Jones**

Franklin County



**Commissioner
Michael Kohler**

Escambia County



Jonathan Lewis

Sarasota County



Commissioner Amy Lockhart
Seminole County



Vince Long
Leon County



Commissioner Sean Parks
Lake County



Commissioner Alonzetta Simpkins
Gadsden County



Carrie Walsh
Charlotte County

UF/IFAS Instructors:



Dr. Matt Sowcik
Associate Professor
CLD Specialization
Coordinator



Dr. Nathan Palardy
Assistant Professor

ICG Staff:



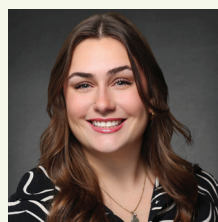
Eric Poole
Director
epoole@flcounties.com



Emily Anderson
Education Manager
eanderson@fl-counties.com



Christopher Mathews
Education & Digital
Program Coordinator
cmathews@fl-counties.com



Ashley Copeland
Education & Affiliate
Assistant
acopeland@fl-counties.com

02 2025 Milestones

- By the numbers**

<u>2025 Ethics:</u>	<u>2025 CCC</u>	<u>2025 CGE</u>	<u>2025 ACC I</u>	<u>2025 ACC II</u>
185 participants	17 Graduates	6 Graduates	6 graduates	11 graduates
- New CCC Electives Created**

 - The Land Development and Review Process for County Officials
- Organizational Updates**

Created the following ICG Committees to Guide ICG Board Work:

 - Educational Programming Committee
 - Data and Research Committee
 - Strategic Planning Committee
 - Newly Elected Commissioner Committee
- Support/coordinated FAC Innovation Day in Alachua County**
- Hosted the Following Webinars**

 - Contracts and COIs: What Public Entities Get Wrong and How to Fix It
 - Land Application of Biosolids and Their Environmental Impacts
 - Exploring NOAA's Digital Coast: Tools for Coastal Management
 - Beyond Maintenance: Transforming Infrastructure with Enterprise Asset Management

By the Numbers



580

Status: Since its inception, the CCC Program has graduated 580 county commissioners.



59

Status: Since its inception, the CGE Program has graduated 59 county staff from the program.

2025 Milestones *Cont.*

Hosted the Following Workshops at FAC Annual Conference

- Emergency Management in Transition: Lessons from the 2023-2024 Hurricane Seasons
- ACC Alumni: A Conversation with Anthony Robles & Dr. Matt Sowcik
- Florida Wildlife Corridor: Mind the Gaps
- Order in the Room: Managing Contentious County Commission Meetings with Confidence and Control
- After the Storm: Disaster Readiness and Respons Across UF/IFAS Programs
- Jedi Mind Tricks and Marketing Magic: The Science Behind How We Make Decisions
- Ethics

Partnered on Training Series with the Florida Economic Development Council (FEDC)

- Two in-person and Two Webinar Training on Economic Development

Engaged in Several Opportunities with NACo

- Represented FAC/ICG on NACo Intergovernmental Disaster Task Force – Congressional Fly-In
- Represented FAC/ICG before Coastal Congressional Caucusu on Sea Level Rise
- Represented FAC/ICG on NOAA Digital Coasts Working Group in Washington, DC

Publications

- Created *“A Guide of Disaster Recovery Best Practices for Counties”*
- Created *“Interregional Mitigation Planning: A Best Practices Guide”*

Podcasts

- Launched New Podcast Spotlighing UF/IFAS: *“From Campus to County”*



313

Status: Since its inception, the ACC I Program has graduated 313 county commissioners.



72

Status: Since its inception, the ACC Level II Program has graduated 72 county commissioners.

03

Strategic Plan and Guidance

In 2018, the ICG Board of Directors adopted a strategic plan to guide its training and other initiatives. As adopted, the plan structures the functions of the ICG around three principal areas: (1) Education and Leadership; (2) Research and Innovation; and, (3) Signature Initiatives.

Education

The Certified County Commissioner (CCC) Program

Launched in 1996, the Certified County Commissioner Program is a voluntary program of study designed for county commissioners to learn information and enhance skills relevant to their duties and responsibilities. Courses are taught by a team of experts, which includes university faculty, government officials, professional speakers, FAC members and FAC staff.

CCC participants must complete a total of 47 hours of course work. This now includes 32 hours of core, 9 hours of electives and 6 hours of continuing education courses. Completion of the course requirements results in the designation of Certified County Commissioner.

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, ICG successfully transferred its in-class content to a digital learning platform. While all core and elective classes can be taken on-demand, the ICG Board requires that at least two core classes be taken in-person, which are offered at various times of the year.

580

Status: Since its inception, the CCC Program has graduated 580 county commissioners.

2025 CCC GRADUATES

- **Michael Atkinson,**
Hendry County
- **Janet Barek,**
Citrus County
- **Jeff Barnes,**
Glades County
- **Bobby Burkett,**
Santa Rosa County
- **Mason Byrd,**
Lafayette County
- **Blake Capps,**
Martin County
- **James Clasby,**
St. Lucie County
- **Anthony Croom,**
Franklin County
- **Rick Davis,**
Madison County
- **Frank DeCarlo,**
Okeechobee County
- **Larry Leet,**
St. Lucie County
- **Erin Lowery,**
St Lucie County
- **Paul Mixon,**
Okaloosa County
- **Leo Mobley,**
Suwannee County
- **Tal Siddique,**
Manatee County
- **Becky Troutman,**
Polk County
- **Ellen Vargas,**
Martin County



FLORIDA
ASSOCIATION OF
COUNTIES
All About Florida

CONNECTING COUNTIES

2025
& EDUCATION

CONFERENCE
& AWARDS

presented by

COUNTY



The County Government Education (CGE) Program

Launched in 2017, this program is a voluntary program of study for county staff that is based on our current Certified County Commissioner (CCC) program. Content for this program includes county government structure and authority, finance and budget, growth management, ethics and Sunshine Law, and Florida’s legislative process. The County Government Education courses are available online, allowing more county staff to participate.

59

Status: Since its inception, the CGE Program has graduated 59 county staff from the program.

2025 CGE GRADUATES

- **Deryk Berger,**
Pasco County
- **Jason Fury,**
Suwannee County
- **Jonathan Lord,**
Flagler County
- **Mandy Fredrickson,**
Suwannee County
- **Andrea Knowles,**
Broward County
- **Mayte Santamaria,**
St. Lucie County

ICG Leadership Forum

The ICG Leadership Forum is carried-out in partnership with the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS). The goal of the program is to advance the skills of county officials by developing both contextual expertise and the leadership competencies necessary for county commissioners to effectively lead their communities. The program includes two tiers of advanced leadership training known as the Advanced County Commissioner Program - Levels I and II.

The Advanced County Commissioner - Level I

The Advanced County Commissioner (ACC) education program is an advanced leadership program designed for graduates of the Certified County Commissioner (CCC) program. The course content focuses on leadership with an emphasis on the future of Florida. Participants are tasked with preparing for the future by thinking and acting anew and asserting skillful leadership in times of daunting challenges and rapid change.

313

Status: Since its inception, the ACC I Program has graduated 313 county commissioners.

Organized as a series of three seminars, the ACC I program is completed after 27 hours of total course work. Participating commissioners must commit to fully participate in all three seminars in order to graduate.

2025 ACC I GRADUATES

- **Jamie Fowler,**
St. Lucie County
- **George Kruse,**
Manatee County
- **Kerry Smith,**
Santa Rosa County
- **Emory Howard,**
Hendry County
- **Alonzetta Simpkins,**
Gadsden County
- **Colten Wright,**
Santa Rosa County



The Advanced County Commissioner - Level II

Launched in 2019, ACC Level II is a new leadership program developed strategically for ACC graduates who seek to expand their education opportunities. ICG has collaborated with UF/IFAS Leadership Institute to develop this next level training that is designed to build upon the skills learned in the CCC and ACC programs. ACC Level II gives alumni an opportunity to develop the tools and skills needed to be strong, versatile leaders and lead the way in transforming their counties and the state of Florida.

72

Status: Since its inception, the ACC Level II Program has graduated 72 county commissioners.

2025 ACC II GRADUATES

- **Rebecca Bays,**
Citrus County
- **Jeff Bogue,**
Sumter County
- **Holly Davis,**
Citrus County
- **Ray Eddington,**
Santa Rosa County
- **Klynt Farmer,**
Nassau County
- **A.M. “Hupp” Huppmann,**
Nassau County
- **Donna Johns,**
Walton County
- **Michael Kohler,**
Escambia County
- **Michael Newman,**
Taylor County
- **Hattie Taylor,**
Glades County
- **Carl Zalak,**
Marion County

Specialty Classes

In response to member interest in expanding their knowledge of county issues, ICG has endeavored to develop an expansive list of Specialty Elective Classes. In all, ICG offers more than 45 elective classes under the following issue areas:



Affordable Housing



County Structure



Human Resources



Technology



Communications



Economic Development



**Planning/Growth
Management**



Resiliency



**Infrastructure &
Environment**



**County Operations
and Efficiencies**



**Emergency Management
& Public Safety**

New electives developed in 2025 include:

- Land Use Review & Approval Process





Political Training Program

The Political Training Program was created as an answer to many of our members who expressed frustration that counties were not well represented in the Legislature; that too many anti-local bills were being pushed and supported by legislators who have little understanding of county government; that one solution to this problem would be to encourage more county commissioners to run for higher office, especially the Legislature.

The program focuses on personal and political preparation for future service as an elected official and community leader. Ideal attendees for the program are commissioners or county staff who are interested in running for higher office, especially the Legislature.



Chairman's Program

The Chairman's Program provides training on the duties, powers and responsibilities of the chair and vice chair leadership positions. The program also explores how chairmen can avoid highly predictable problems and make slight changes in behavior to most effectively run a county commission meeting. While this program is designed for board chairs and vice chairs, all commissioners will benefit from the training which includes tips for becoming an effective communicator with the media and with the community.





Studio 67



Studio 67 was created in 2020 to ensure counties could stay informed on emerging issues impacting their communities. This multi-purpose studio was expanded in 2022 and is equipped to host webinars, podcasts, video interviews, and ICG courses. Since its inception, more than 80 webinars and podcasts have been generated.



County Connections

- Contracts and COIs: What Public Entities Get Wrong and How to Fix It
- Land Application of Biosolids and Their Environmental Impacts
- Exploring NOAA’s Digital Coast: Tools for Coastal Management
- Beyond Maintenance: Transforming Infrastructure with Enterprise Asset Management



From Campus to County: UF/IFAS

- A Conversation with Dr. Scott Angle, Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources
- UF/IFAS Extension Across Florida’s County: Dr. Andra Johnson, Dean of IFAS Extension

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH





County Conversations Podcast Series

- Disasters, Debris and Beyond: A Conversation with Ashbritt
- 1000 Friends of Florida: A Conversation With Paul Owens



04

ICG Goals for 2026

- Support the Work of ICG Committees:**

 - Newly Elected Commissioner Committee
 - Strategic Planning Committee
 - Educational Programming Committee
 - Research, Data, and Enterprise Committee
- Update ICG Strategic Plan**
- Revise and update CCC core classes by December 2026**
- Develop New 3 -day County Commissioner Bootcamp for 2026 Legislative Conference**
- Host in-person CCC trainings for new commissioners in Gainesville (January 2027)**
- Develop New 3-day leadership training program for county staff (April 2026)**
- Host ACC 1 and ACC 2 for 2026/27 (first classes October/November 2026)**
- Continue expanding course electives, including the following:**

 - County Health and Human Services
- Launch new Best Practices in County Government video series (quarterly)**
- Maintain and update ICG online publications**
- Continue participation in NACo’s Intergovernmental Disaster Task Force**
- Leverage partnership opportunities with FAC affiliates and other organizations to develop education opportunities.**
- Coordinate/ Support 2026 Innovation Day (Duval County)**
- Revised Commissioner to Commissioner Mentor Program for newly elected county commissioners**



Carol Savi
External Affairs Manager
North Florida
FPL



2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EDUCATIONAL EXHIBITION
CONNECTING COUNTIES
Ramon
Ramon Iglesias
Commissioner
Hendry County
COMMISSIONER/
COUNCILMEMBER
CERTIFIED COUNTY
COMMISSIONER
ADVANCED COUNTY
COMMISSIONER I
ADVANCED COUNTY
COMMISSIONER II



Learn. Serve. Lead.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

flicg.org

