

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2026



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Alachua's Advantages: Economic Development

Why Alachua? Why choose to live, work, or do business here?

Quality of Life – the leading reason individuals and businesses choose a community. While priorities vary from person to person, thriving communities share several traits, and Alachua has a long invested in each one:

- Quality education
- Recreation and cultural amenities
- Natural outdoor assets
- Strong infrastructure and reliable public services
- Affordable cost of living
- A diverse and growing job market

Location – Nowhere else in America will you find a small-town committed to encouraging smart growth that is within 20 minutes of a top-5 public university (the University of Florida) and a top-10 community college (Santa Fe College). Logistically, Alachua sits at the confluence of Interstate-75 and US Highway 441 and is nearly equidistant between Orlando, Tampa, Jacksonville, and Tallahassee.

Adaptability – many communities are susceptible to economic downturns if any large business or industry struggles, but Alachua has a decades-long history of economic resiliency, weathering various challenges. Our diverse economy across several sectors positions us to succeed even in the midst of difficult economic seasons.

Alachua also has a crucial intangible – a large number of people who deeply care and are invested in the community. From very active civic organizations to several religious institutions, many people are invested in making Alachua the best community it can be.

Learn more through the pages that follow and connect with us to discover all that Alachua has to offer.



David Wisener
Economic Development
Manager





Business Concierge – Economic Development Manager

The City's Economic Development Manager, David Wisener, is available to offer assistance to both existing local businesses and businesses considering locating to Alachua.

Whatever you need help with, David will work with you to try to find answers and connect you with the right people. You can contact him by phone at 386-418-6203 or by email at:

dwisener@cityofalachua.com

Business Support Resources

City Website www.cityofalachua.com/business

One-Stop Business Center – the City provides a variety of helpful links on this page. Included are:

- Tips from the Florida Department of State and US Small Business Administration on steps to starting a business.
- All City links for local requirements including all required documentation; fee payment options; Planning and Zoning-related forms and information; local business tax and vendor registrations; local business incentives; and civic business organizations.
- County, State, and Federal resources and available business incentives.

Business Incentives

a list and description of all the local business incentives offered by the City including the Ordinance detailing each and applications for each.

- Business Development Electric Discount – electric discount for applicants that will generate at least 350 kW of demand per month.
- Electric Contribution in Aid of Construction – discount on modification of electric infrastructure to serve new or additional electric system load.
- Expedited Permitting Service – two-week review reduction for permits for rezoning, site plan, and subdivision plats for businesses located in the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) or that can show alignment with an initiative in the City's Strategic Plan.
- Incubator / Accelerator Entrant Lease Subsidy – subsidy for up to two years and \$12,000 for businesses entering an incubator or accelerator within the City.
- Incubator / Accelerator Graduate Lease Subsidy – subsidy for up to two years and \$12,000 for businesses graduated from an incubator or accelerator locating within the City.
- Tech Event Matching Grant – reimbursable funds at a 50% match up to \$1,500 for technology-focused events and programs.
- Small Business Assistance Program – reimbursable funds at a 50% match up to \$20,000 for businesses not exceeding 25 employees and not a franchisee for various fees / charges.
- Business Façade Grant Program – reimbursable funds at a 50% match up to \$12,500 for façade improvement projects and up to \$3,000 for signage for businesses in the CRA.

Highlights of 2025

- Ben E. Keith Foods held a groundbreaking for its 707,000-sf Florida Division Headquarters and distribution center which will provide over 400 jobs over the next five years.
- G&C Foods held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its 250,000-sf Southeast distribution center.
- Siemens opened a 30,000-sf office and warehouse in San Felasco Tech City.
- Market on Main was formed, a weekly farmer's market organized by the Alachua Business League (ABL).
- The City finalized an inter local agreement with CareerSource North Central Florida to open a satellite office to assist residents with workforce skill development and job assistance.
- Strive Pharmacy acquired National Resilience's former 275,000-square-foot manufacturing facility with the goal of turning it into a drug compound and contract manufacturing site.
- The City passed on ordinance clearing the way for all establishments to sell alcohol in the downtown business district in an effort to stimulate foot traffic.
- A community partnership won the Levitt Concert Series Grant, funding 10 concerts per year in the downtown district from 2026 through 2028.
- The ABL started hosting regular small-business training sessions once every two months, hosted by the Good Life Station.
- Several small businesses and franchises opened new locations throughout the year, some of which included Wawa, Firestone, Main Street Family Care, The Ice Cream Vault, Mi Apa Latin Café, Chick-fil-A, Fundora Jewelry, and Black Optix Tint.

Goals for 2026

Enhancing Quality of Life – ultimately, all of Alachua’s economic development goals aim at bolstering our community’s quality of life. Specifically, for 2026 we will look at:

Culture – looking for opportunities to increase cultural activities, which can range from adding or attracting festivals, special events, public art; and establishments such as art galleries, museums, or entertainment venues.

Education – improve the quality of education from Pre-K through college by supporting the work of the City’s Education Task Force and partnering with schools and civic organizations.

Tourism – seeking to draw more attention to the unique tourist attractions in the surrounding community – ranging from freshwater springs to the San Felasco Hammock to the Santa Fe River – will help boost the amount of customer traffic to local businesses.

Local and Regional Brand Identity – establishing a marketing identity for both the City and the region (in partnership with others) will assist in promoting Alachua and our area as a destination for visitors, potential residents, and businesses.

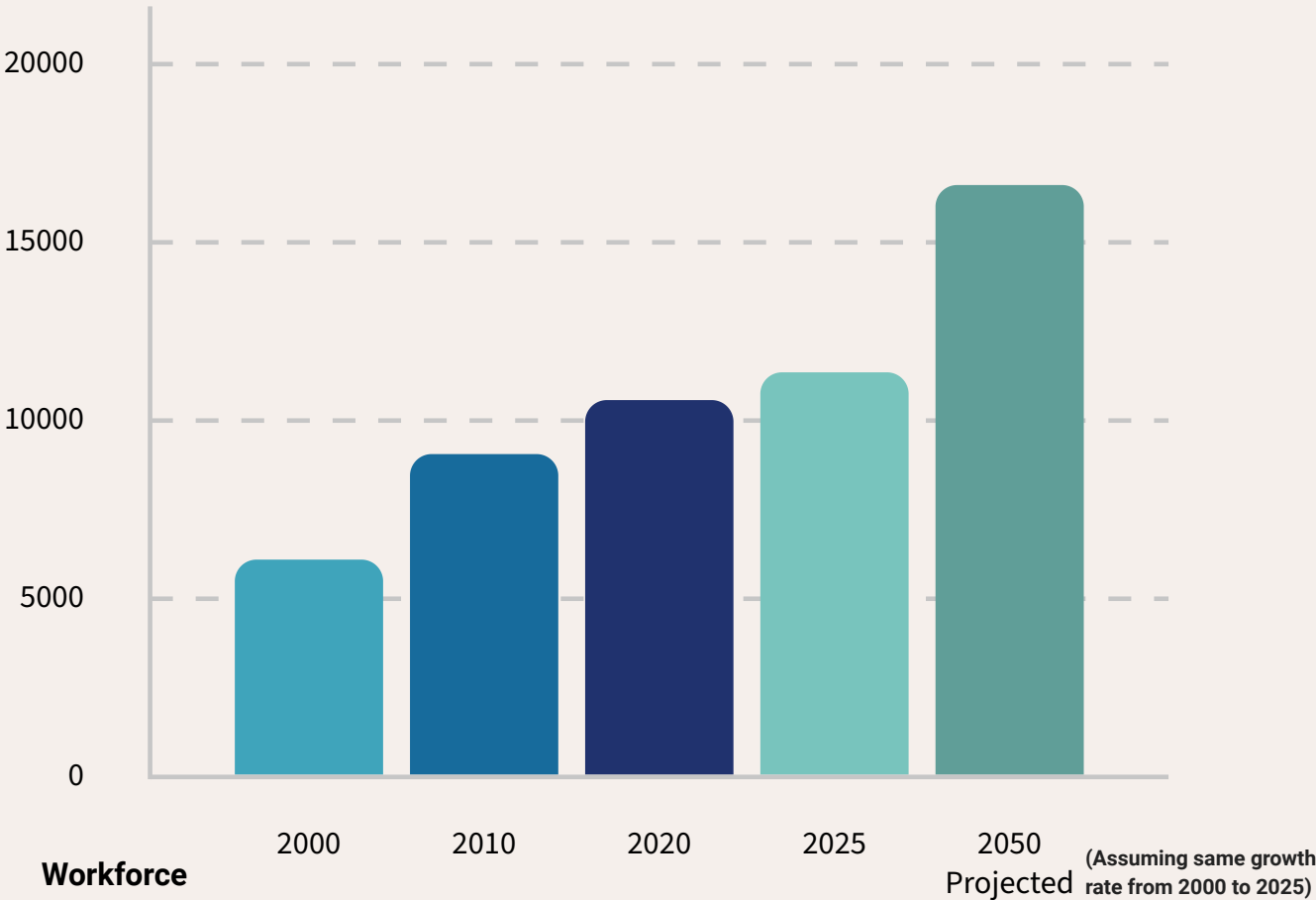
Business Retention and Expansion Listening Tour – targeting visits with at least 15 employers in the City to learn about issues, challenges, and recommendations will help identify ways in which the community can provide better support for businesses.

Communication – starting with this Report, the City will look to improve communication with area stakeholders by producing a regular Annual Report and bi-annual economic development newsletters to keep the public up-to-date on the status of the local economy.

Alachua By Numbers

Growth 2000 – Present, Projections to 2050

Population



Workforce

Alachua Residents Working: 5,054
Total Alachua Jobs: 6,862

Education

	Alachua	Florida	U.S.
No High School Diploma	3.1%	9.7%	10%
High School Graduate	22.3%	26.7%	25%
A.A. Degree	12.8%	11%	9.2%
Bachelor's Degree	30.4%	22%	22.8%
Postgraduate Degree	19.1%	12%	13.8%

Race / Ethnicity

	Alachua	Florida	U.S.
White	63.7%	59.9%	63.4%
Black or African American	24.7%	15.3%	12.4%
Asian	1.5%	2.9%	5.8%
Some Other Race	2.6%	5.6%	6.6%
Two or More Races	7.5%	16%	10.7%
Hispanic or Latino	9.5%	26.7%	19%

Cost of Living and Average Income

Cost of Living Index

The cost of living is 12.5% lower in Alachua than the Florida average and 10.2% lower than the U.S. average.

Median Household Income

Alachua	Florida	U.S.
\$78,526	\$71,711	\$78,538

Average House Value

Alachua	Florida	U.S.
\$285,700	\$325,000	\$303,400

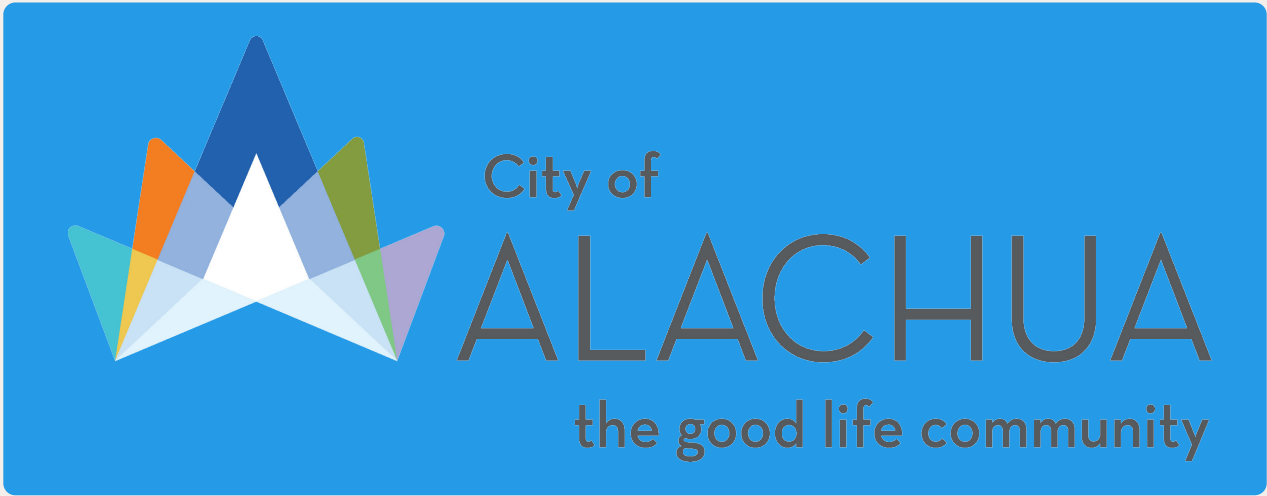
Homeowner and Rental Vacancy

Homeowner Vacancy (Available Homes)

Alachua	Florida	U.S.
4.9%	1.5%	1%

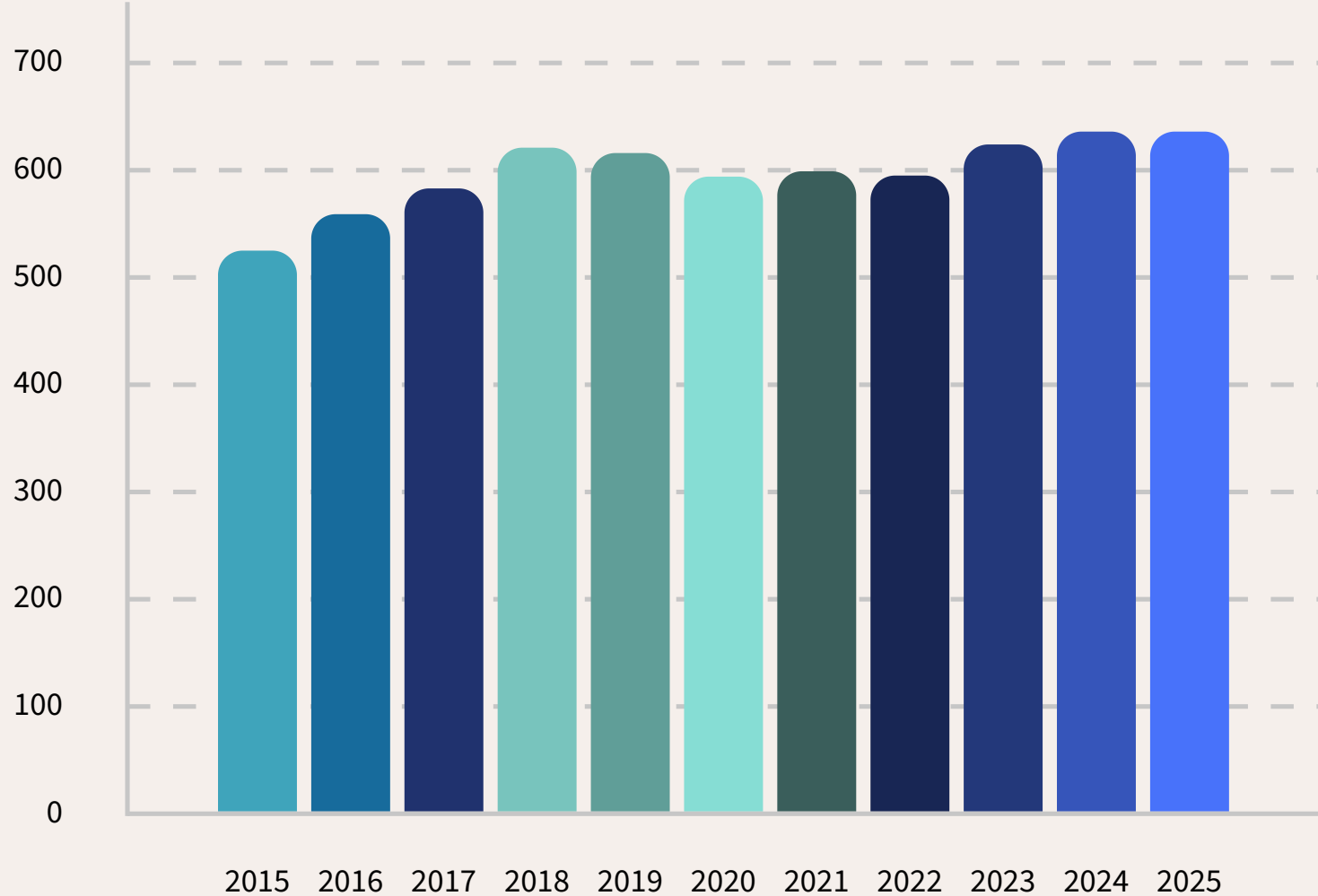
Rental Vacancy (Available Rentals)

Alachua	Florida	U.S.
8.4%	7.6%	5.5%



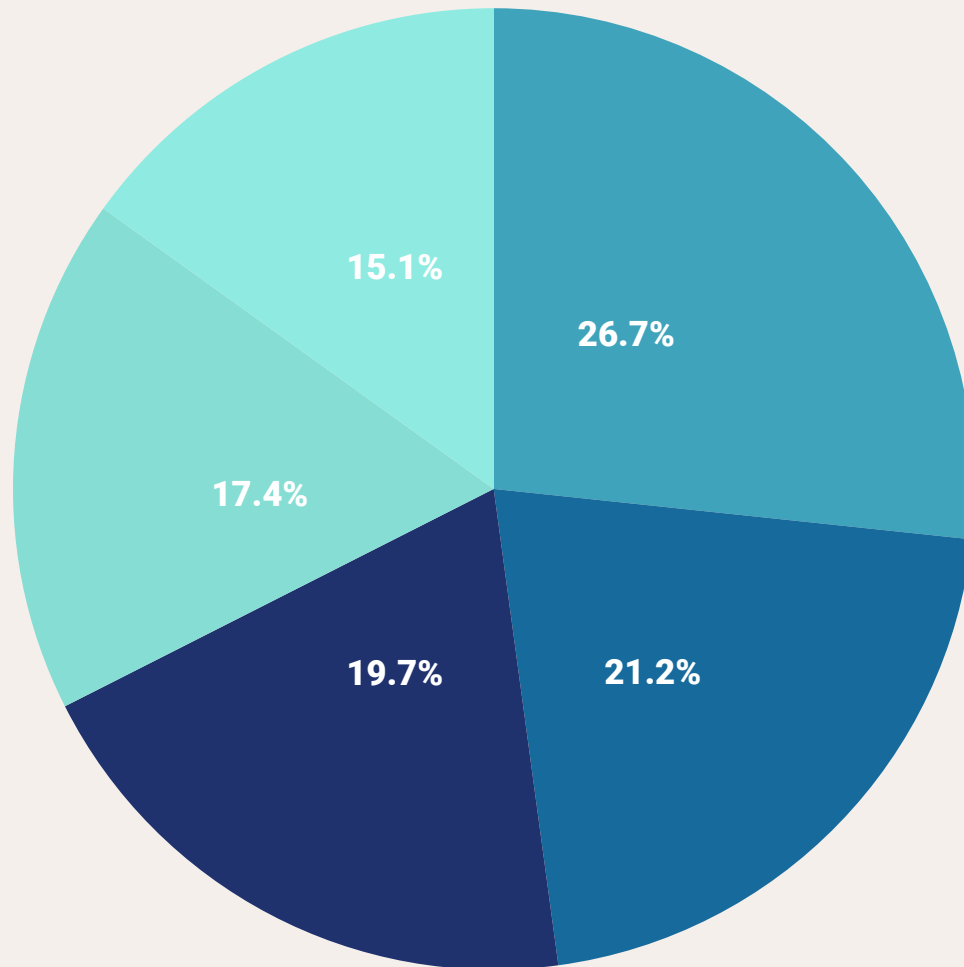
Jobs and Employment

Total Establishments By Year



(Source: YourEconomy)

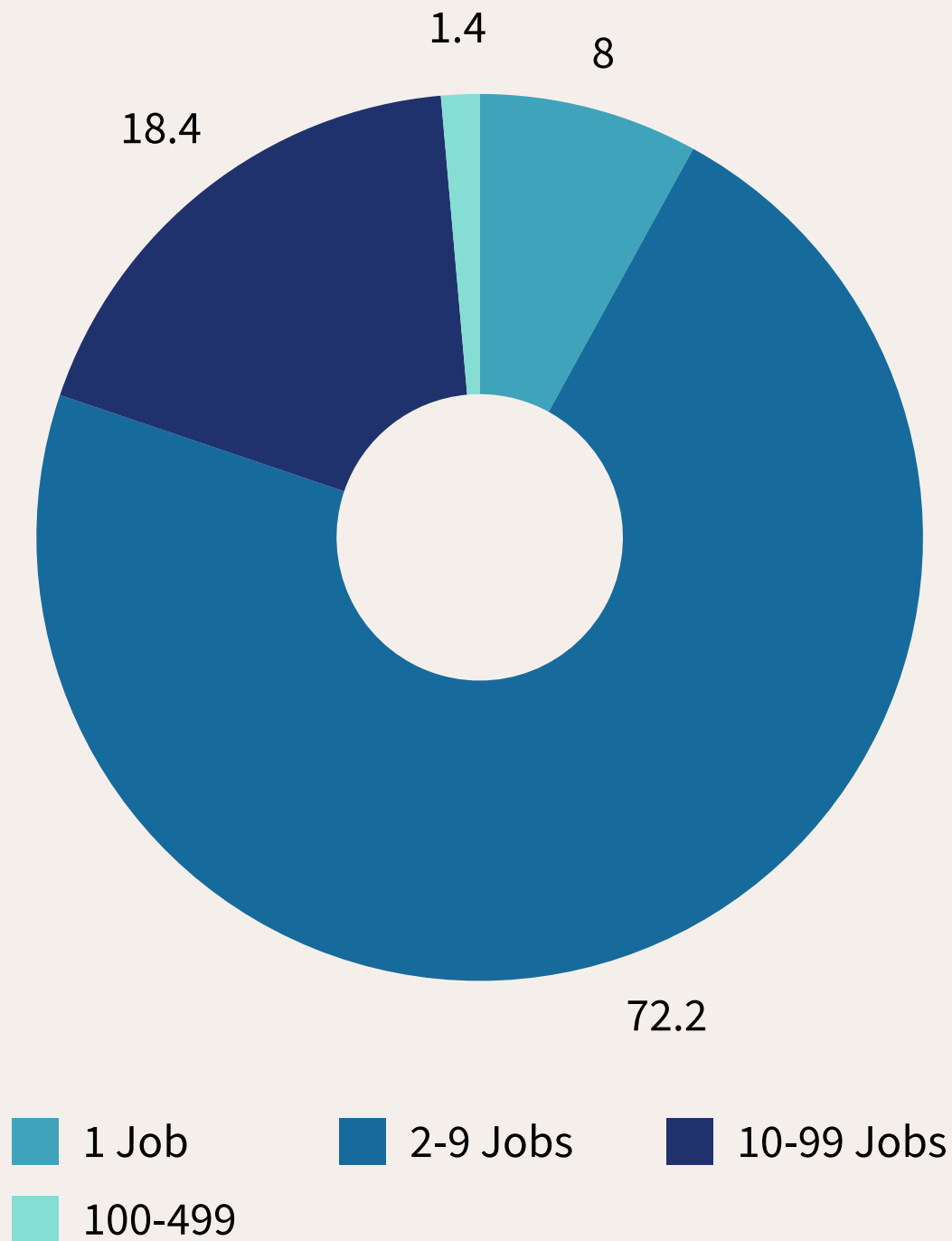
Establishments by Industry



- Other Services (except Public Administration) (26.7)
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (21.2)
- Retail Trade (19.7)
- Construction (17.4)
- Accommodations and Food Services (15.1)

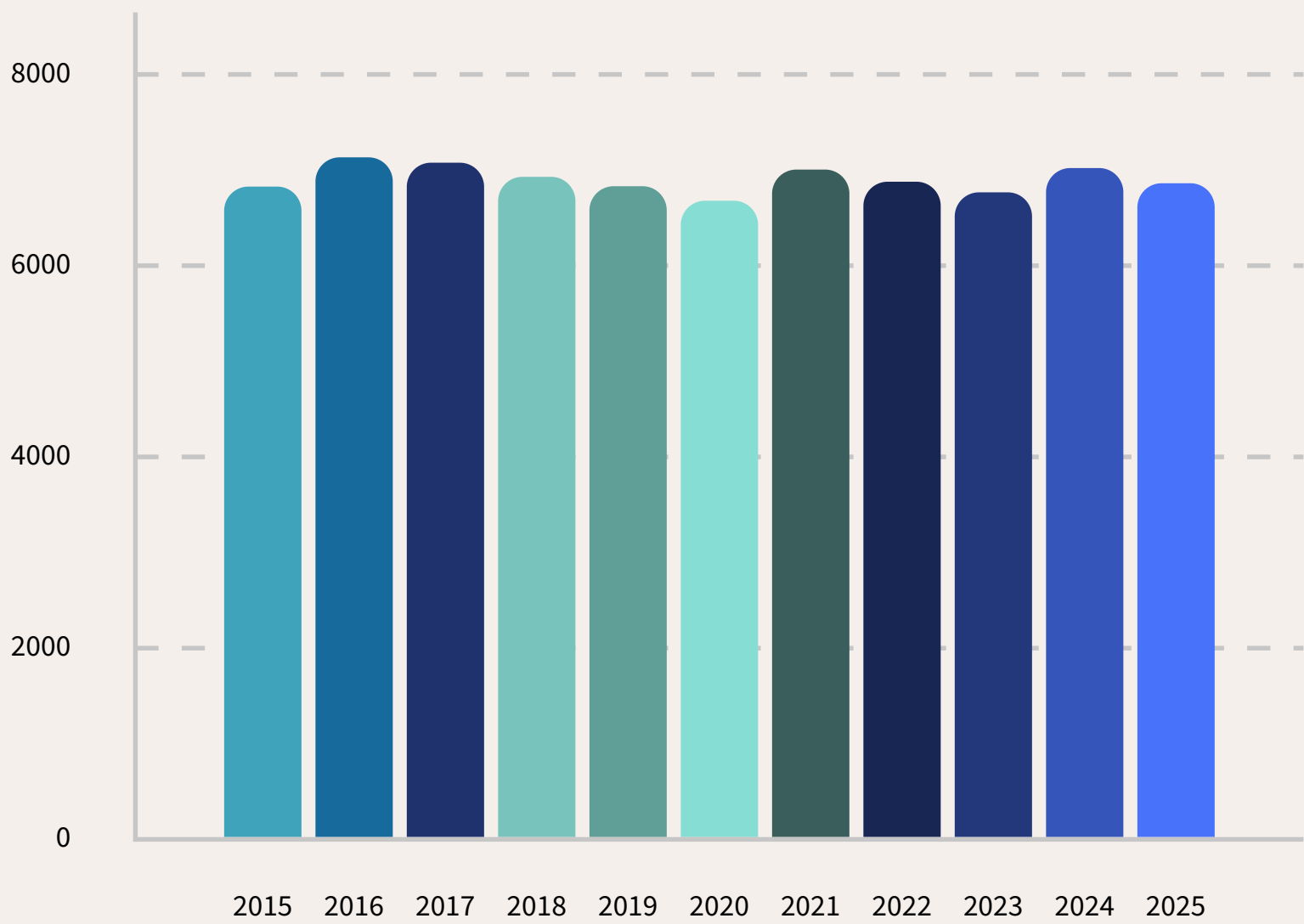
(Source: YourEconomy)

Establishments 2015 – Present: By Size



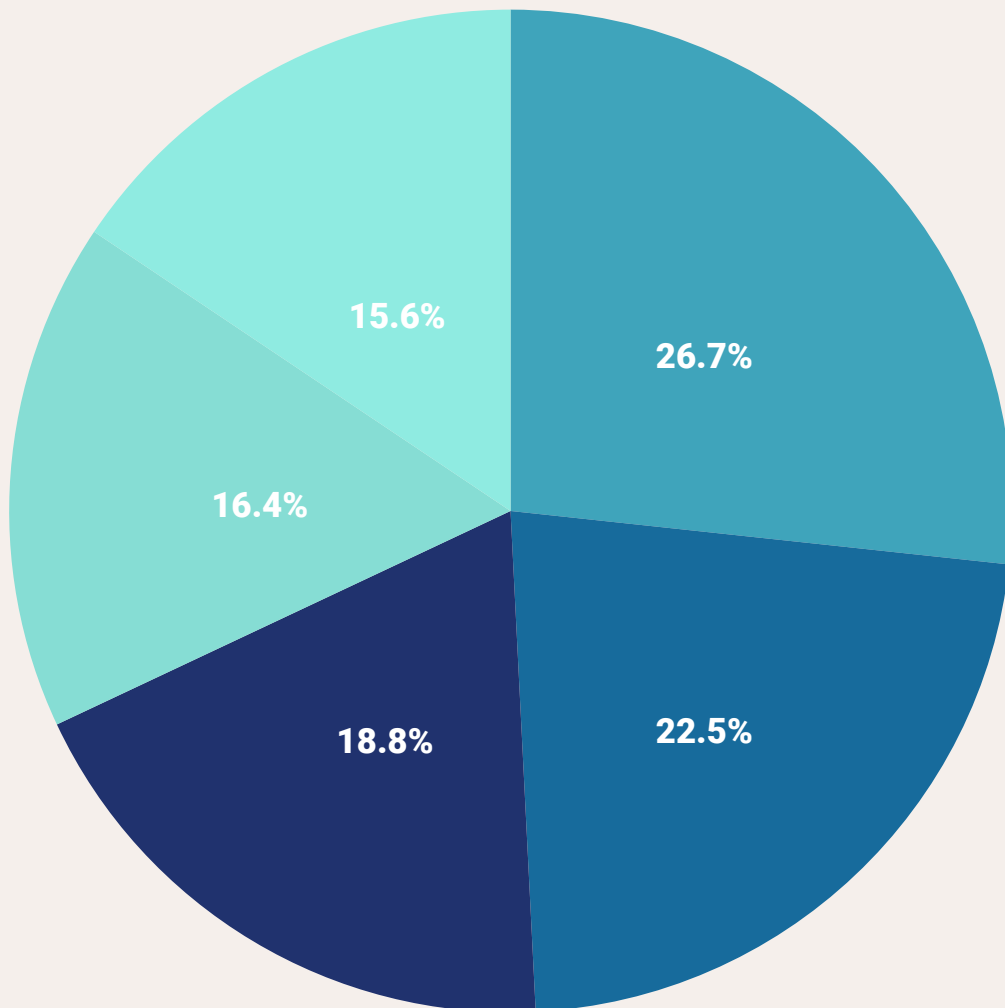
(Source: YourEconomy)

Total Jobs 2015 - Present



(Source: YourEconomy)

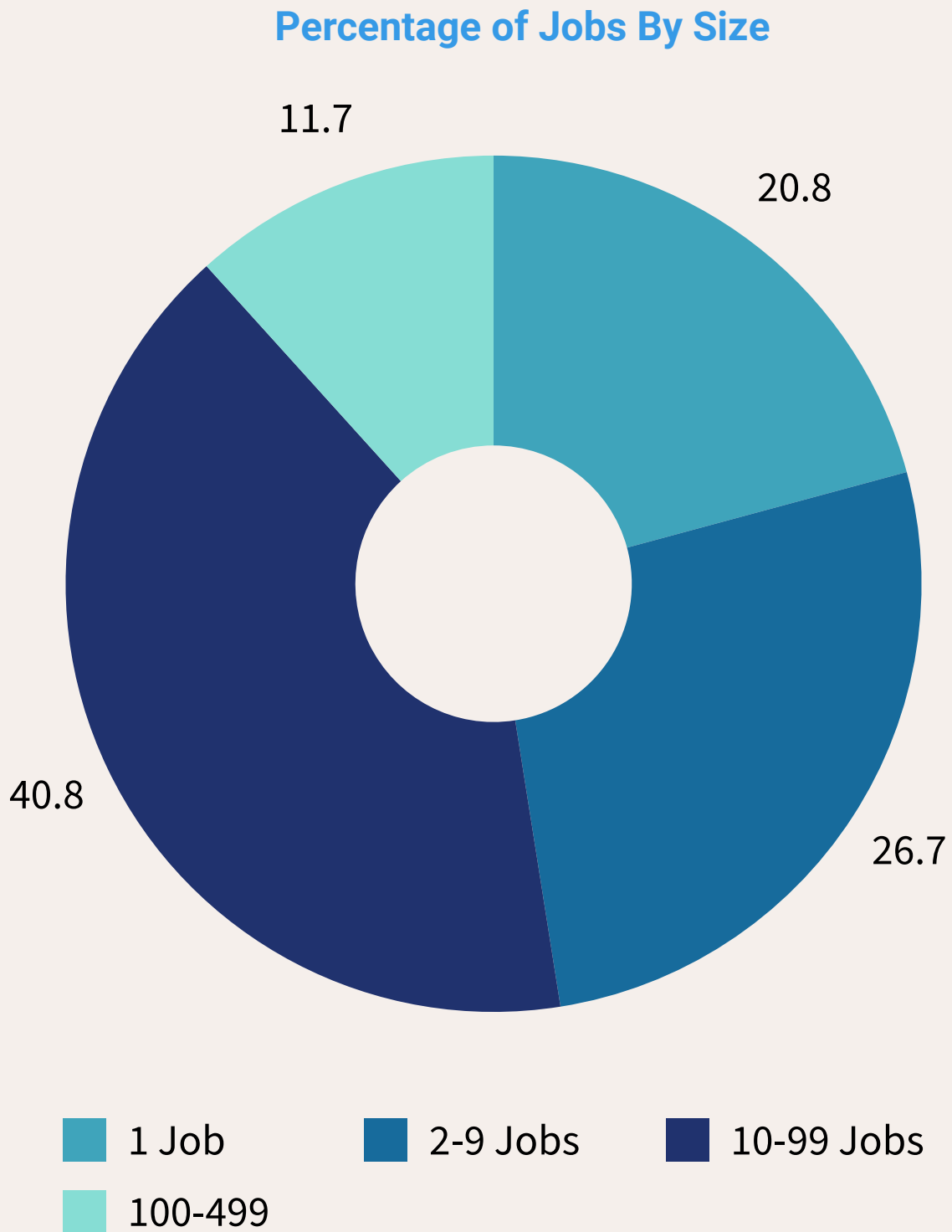
Jobs by Industry



- Wholesale Trade (26.7)
- Manufacturing (22.5)
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (18.8)
- Accommodations and Food Services (16.4)
- Retail Trade (15.6)

(Source: YourEconomy)

Jobs By Establishments Size



(Source: YourEconomy)

Employment and Wage Growth

Employment Growth

Alachua

1.9%

Florida

0.3%

U.S.

0.5%

Wage Growth

Alachua

6.1%

Florida

4.7%

U.S.

4.1%

(Source: YourEconomy)



City of
ALACHUA
the good life community