



City of Eustis

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TO: Eustis City Commission

FROM: Rick Gierok, Interim City Manager

DATE: June 18, 2026

RE: Resolution Number 2026-57: City of Eustis/UCF Business Incubator Partnership Agreement Renewal

Introduction:

As part of the City's ongoing economic development strategy to stimulate entrepreneurship, create jobs, and support the growth of local businesses, the City of Eustis seeks to continue its partnership with the University of Central Florida (UCF) Business Incubation Program. Resolution Number 2026-57 approves a Second Funding Agreement between the City of Eustis and UCF for the continued operation of the UCF/Eustis Business Incubator located in downtown Eustis.

The business incubator provides entrepreneurs and early-stage companies with access to professional business coaching, mentoring, educational programming, strategic planning assistance, networking opportunities, and other resources necessary to help businesses launch, grow, and remain in Lake County.

Background:

The City's efforts to establish a business incubator began in 2022 when the City Commission participated in a workshop with representatives from the University of Central Florida regarding the feasibility of creating a business incubator in downtown Eustis. Following additional research and evaluation by City staff, the Commission approved a partnership agreement with UCF in 2023.

Since opening, the UCF Business Incubator in Eustis has served entrepreneurs and small businesses throughout Lake County by providing business development services, entrepreneur training programs, mentoring opportunities, and business boot camps. The incubator has become an important component of the City's economic development initiatives and has strengthened partnerships among local governments, educational institutions, and the business community.

The current agreement between the City and UCF expires on August 31, 2026. UCF and the City have negotiated a Second Funding Agreement that will continue incubator operations for an additional three-year period.

Summary of the Second Funding Agreement:

The proposed agreement provides for:

- A three-year term beginning October 1, 2026, and ending September 30, 2029.
- UCF Program manager of administrative and client services located in the City of Eustis.
- Professional business coaching, mentoring, and consulting services for incubator clients.
- Entrepreneur development programming and educational workshops.
- Two business boot camp programs annually for small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Development and maintenance of mentor, investor, and service-provider networks.
- Partnerships with Lake Technical College, Lake-Sumter State College, the Small Business Development Center, and other economic development organizations.
- Annual performance reporting documenting incubator outcomes and economic impacts.

Funding:

Under the proposed funding structure, the City of Eustis will contribute \$42,500 annually toward the operation of the incubator program. Lake County will provide an annual contribution of \$127,500 through a separate interlocal funding agreement, resulting in total municipal annual funding of \$170,000.

UCF will apply \$90,000 in unspent funds toward the operation of the UCF Business Incubator - Eustis during the term of this agreement with the City of Eustis in the amount of Thirty Thousand dollars (\$30,000.00) per year for three (3) years. The total municipal and UCF annual funding for the UCF/Business incubator is \$200,000.

The funding will support UCF staffing, entrepreneur development programs, business coaching services, marketing efforts, mentor development, and other operational activities necessary to sustain the incubator program.

Economic Development Benefits:

The UCF Business Incubator is expected to continue generating measurable economic benefits for the City of Eustis and Lake County by:

- Supporting startup and early-stage companies.
- Assisting existing businesses with expansion and growth.
- Creating and retaining jobs.
- Increasing private-sector investment.
- Strengthening the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Encouraging graduates of the program to remain in Eustis and Lake County after completing incubation services.

Fiscal Impact:

The City's annual financial commitment under the agreement is \$42,500, which has been included in the proposed Economic Development budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 and will be budgeted in subsequent fiscal years subject to annual appropriations.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of Resolution Number 2026-57 approving the Second Funding Agreement between the City of Eustis and the University of Central Florida for the continued operation of the Business Incubator Program and authorizing the City Manager to execute the agreement.

Prepared by:

Al Latimer, Economic Development and CRA Director

Reviewed by:

Miranda Burrowes, Deputy City Manager