

Economic Development Dashboard FAQs

Business Development and Recruitment

Business Development and Recruitment metrics show how effectively Putnam County is competing for new jobs, new investment, and new opportunities. Tracking this data helps us understand the volume and quality of leads coming into the community, how quickly we respond, and how our project pipeline is evolving over time. These indicators reveal whether our marketing, outreach, and site readiness efforts are working—and where we need to adjust to stay competitive. By monitoring leads, proposals, site visits, and active projects, we can demonstrate return on investment, identify emerging industry interest, and ensure we are proactively positioning Putnam County for long-term economic growth.

Source: These metrics are tracked internally

Business Retention and Expansion

Business Retention & Expansion tracking helps us understand the health, needs, and growth potential of the employers who already anchor Putnam County's economy. Most new jobs come from existing businesses, so monitoring BRE visits, issues, expansions, and risk factors allows us to spot challenges early, connect companies to resources, and support their long-term success. These metrics show whether our outreach is consistent, whether businesses feel supported, and where strategic investments—like workforce, infrastructure, or permitting improvements—can make the biggest impact. By tracking BRE activity, we ensure that Putnam County protects its existing job base, strengthens relationships with employers, and creates the conditions for sustainable, locally driven growth.

Source: These metrics are tracked internally

Development Activity & Permitting Indicators

Development and permitting data show the pace, scale, and direction of growth in Putnam County. Tracking permits, project values, square footage, and Certificates of Occupancy help us understand where investment is happening, how quickly projects are moving, and what types of development are shaping our tax base and job market. These indicators act as early signals of economic momentum revealing trends in commercial activity, construction demand, and market confidence. By monitoring this information, we can forecast infrastructure needs, support planning and zoning decisions, and demonstrate to partners and investors that Putnam County is actively growing and ready for future development.

- Commercial Inventory SF - shows how much space is immediately available for business recruitment and expansion. Available square footage reflects the current

Economic Development Dashboard FAQs

supply of commercial product in the market. When availability is high, it may indicate slower demand or excess inventory; when low, it signals a tight market that may limit recruitment opportunities. This helps economic developers understand whether the community can support prospects looking for move-in-ready space.

- Commercial SF Under Construction - We track commercial market square footage *under construction* because it shows the pipeline of future space coming to market and signals developer confidence, investment momentum, and the direction of market conditions.
- 12-Month Net Absorption SF - is the clearest measure of real demand in the commercial market, showing whether businesses are filling space or giving it back. A 12-month window removes seasonal swings and one-off events, giving you a **trendline** rather than a snapshot. This makes it ideal for quarterly dashboards and year-over-year comparisons.

Absorption Type	What It Means	Market Signal
Positive Net Absorption	More space was leased than vacated	Businesses are expanding; new firms entering; demand strengthening
Negative Net Absorption	More space was vacated than leased	Businesses downsizing, closing, or relocating; demand weakening
Flat / Near-Zero Absorption	Move-ins roughly equal move-outs	Market stable but not growing
Formula	Net absorption = space moved into – space moved out	Measures total change in occupied square footage over 12 months

Source(s): Putnam County Development Services Reporting, Co-Star

Workforce & Talent Indicators

Workforce and talent indicators show whether Putnam County has the people, skills, and training capacity employers need to grow. By monitoring participation rates, unemployment, job demand, training enrollments and completions, and commuting patterns, we get a real-time picture of our talent pipeline, its strengths, its gaps, and its

Economic Development Dashboard FAQs

future trajectory. These metrics help us target workforce programs, support employers, align education partners, and attract industries that fit our local skill base. Tracking this data ensures we are building a competitive, resilient workforce that can sustain long-term economic growth.

- Labor force Participation Rate - measures the share of working-aged people who are either employed or actively seeking work. Unlike the unemployment rate, which only reflects people already in the labor force, LFPR shows the full picture of engagement, including whether residents are opting out of work entirely. This makes it a foundational indicator for understanding Putnam County's true workforce capacity.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Yr Estimate

- Unemployment Rate - measures the share of people in the labor force who are actively seeking work but cannot find a job. This makes it a core indicator of economic conditions and a critical tool for understanding how well Putnam County's economy is functioning. When unemployment rises, it often signals economic slowdown, reduced business activity, or mismatches between available jobs and available skills. When it falls, it typically reflects stronger hiring, business expansion, and increased economic confidence.

Source: FL Department of Commerce via US DOL

- Job Postings by Industry - give us a real-time window into employer demand, what skills are needed, which sectors are growing, and where hiring pressure is building. Unlike traditional labor market data, postings reflect current and emerging needs, making them one of the fastest indicators of economic momentum. Tracking this information helps us understand which industries are expanding, where talent shortages may be forming, and how well our workforce aligns with employer expectations.

Source: Lightcast, Job Postings

- Top In-demand Occupations - Tracking the most in-demand occupations shows which jobs employers are struggling to fill and where the greatest opportunities exist for residents. These occupations reflect real-time hiring pressure, skill shortages, and emerging trends across key industries. By understanding which roles are most sought after, whether nurses, truck drivers, welders, retail supervisors, or technicians, we can align training programs, career pathways, and recruitment strategies to meet employer needs.

Economic Development Dashboard FAQs

Source: Lightcast, Job Postings

- Training Program Enrollments & Completions - Tracking enrollments and completions in postsecondary training programs shows how well our talent pipeline is developing the skills local employers need. These metrics reveal whether residents are entering high-demand fields, progressing through training, and graduating with credentials that lead to quality jobs. They also help us understand the capacity of our education partners and whether programs are aligned with industry demand.

Source: Lightcast

- Commuting Patterns - Commuting patterns show where residents live, where they work, and how talent flows in and out of Putnam County. This data helps us understand whether our workforce is staying local, whether employers rely heavily on in-commuters, and how transportation, housing, and job availability shape daily life. Tracking commuting patterns reveals the balance between local job opportunities and resident skill sets, and it highlights opportunities to strengthen both workforce retention and employer recruitment.

Source: Lightcast

General Economic Health Indicators

General Economic Health indicators provide the high-level context needed to understand the overall direction, stability, and momentum of Putnam County's economy. These metrics such as population trends, median household income, GRP, poverty rates, and housing affordability, show whether the community is growing, whether residents are prospering, and whether the local economy is becoming more competitive over time. They help us see the "forest," not just the "trees," by tying together workforce, business activity, development patterns, and quality of life.

- Population Growth/Decline - Population growth and decline are foundational indicators of a community's long-term economic health. These trends show whether people are choosing to live in Putnam County, whether we are attracting new residents, and whether our workforce is expanding or shrinking. Tracking population change helps us understand demand for housing, infrastructure, schools, and services, and it signals to employers and investors whether the community is positioned for future growth.

Source: Lightcast

Economic Development Dashboard FAQs

- Median Household Income Trends - Median household income trends show whether residents are becoming more financially secure over time and whether the local economy is creating pathways to higher-wage opportunities. Because median income reflects the “typical” household, not just high earners, it is one of the most reliable indicators of community prosperity, economic mobility, and long-term competitiveness. Tracking this metric helps us understand whether wages are keeping pace with the cost of living, whether new jobs are improving household stability, and how Putnam County compares to regional and statewide growth.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Yr Estimates

- Poverty Rate - The poverty rate is a core indicator of community well-being and economic stability. Tracking this metric helps us understand how many residents are struggling to meet basic needs and whether economic growth is translating into improved quality of life. Poverty levels influence everything from workforce participation to educational outcomes, housing stability, and long-term health. For economic developers, the poverty rate is not just a social measure—it is a signal of economic capacity, opportunity gaps, and areas where targeted investment can make the greatest impact.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Yr Estimates

- Local Sales Tax Collections - Sales tax collections are one of the most immediate indicators of local economic activity. Because they reflect real spending by residents, visitors, and businesses, they help us understand the strength of Putnam County’s retail sector, consumer confidence, and overall economic momentum. Tracking these collections also provides insight into the county’s fiscal capacity, since sales tax revenues support essential public services and infrastructure investments.
Source: Florida Department of Revenue – taxresearch

- Gross Regional Product (GRP) - GRP measures the total value of all goods and services produced within Putnam County. It is the regional equivalent of GDP but focused on the county level. This makes it the most comprehensive indicator of local economic health and productivity. It tells us how much value our local economy actually produces and how that production is changing over time.
Source: Lightcast

- Housing Indicators - help us understand whether Putnam County has the homes, price points, and availability needed to support residents, employers, and future

Economic Development Dashboard FAQs

growth. These metrics, such as home prices, rental rates, vacancies, new construction, and affordability, show how well the local housing market is functioning and whether it can meet the needs of a growing workforce. Tracking housing data also reveals pressures that affect economic mobility, employer recruitment, and overall quality of life.

Source: Northeast Florida Association of Realtors

Quality of Life Indicators

Quality of life indicators show how well Putnam County is meeting the needs of its residents and how attractive the community is to current and future employers, workers, and families. These metrics, such as safety, education, healthcare access, broadband availability, and community amenities, help us understand the lived experience of residents and the overall desirability of the county as a place to live, work, and invest. Tracking quality of life provides a holistic view of community health that complements traditional economic metrics.

- Crime Rates - help us understand how safe a community is and how effectively public safety systems are functioning. Research shows that crime is closely tied to broader economic and social conditions, making it a critical component of any comprehensive economic health dashboard. Crime affects everything from business investment to population growth, and tracking it allows leaders to identify trends, allocate resources, and design strategies that support both safety and economic vitality.

Source: FDLE – Unified Crime Reports

- School Performance Indicators - show how effectively a community is preparing its future workforce and whether students are on track for long-term success. They provide clear, measurable signals about academic outcomes, system health, and where targeted support or investment is needed.
 - High School Graduation Rate -The high school graduation rate is one of the most important indicators of a community’s long-term economic health. It shows whether students are completing their K–12 education on time and whether the school system is successfully preparing young people for college, career training, or direct entry into the workforce. Because graduation is a major predictor of lifetime earnings, employment stability, and community well-being, this metric is essential for understanding both current and future workforce capacity.

Economic Development Dashboard FAQs

Source: Florida Department of Education

- 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency - 3rd grade reading proficiency is one of the most powerful early predictors of a child's long-term academic and economic success. By the end of 3rd grade, students shift from learning- to-read to reading- to- learn, and those who are not proficient by this point are far more likely to struggle in later grades, fall behind in other subjects, and face barriers to graduation and career readiness. Tracking this metric helps us understand the strength of the early learning pipeline and where targeted support is needed to ensure students stay on track.

Source: Florida Department of Education

- Florida School Grade - provides a comprehensive, statewide measure of how well a school or district is performing across multiple dimensions, achievement, learning gains, acceleration, graduation, and readiness. Because it uses a standardized methodology applied across all 67 counties, the School Grade offers an easy-to-understand benchmark that families, employers, and site selectors recognize and trust. Tracking this indicator helps us understand overall system performance and how Putnam County compares to peers across Florida.

Source: Florida Department of Education

- Healthcare Access Metrics - Healthcare access metrics show whether residents can obtain the medical care they need when they need it. These indicators reflect the availability of primary care, mental health services, hospitals, specialists, and insurance coverage. Because access to healthcare directly affects workforce stability, community well-being, and economic performance, tracking these metrics helps us understand both current conditions and future needs in Putnam County.

- Primary Care Providers (per 100K residents) - Primary care provider availability is one of the most important indicators of a community's overall health access. Tracking the number of primary care physicians per 100,000 residents shows whether people can get routine, preventive, and urgent care close to home. Because primary care is the front door of the healthcare system, this metric directly affects health outcomes, workforce productivity, and long-term economic stability.

Economic Development Dashboard FAQs

*Source: Florida Department of Health (FLHeathCHARTS),
CountyHealthRankings.org*

- Health Insurance Coverage Rates - Health insurance coverage rates show whether residents can access healthcare without facing financial hardship. Because insurance is the gateway to primary care, preventive services, mental health support, and chronic disease management, this metric is one of the strongest indicators of community health and economic stability. Tracking coverage rates helps us understand how many residents may be delaying care, relying on emergency rooms, or facing avoidable health and financial challenges.

Source: Census.gov SAHIE (small area health insurance estimates)

Broadband Availability & Speeds

Broadband access is now a foundational quality-of-life indicator, just as essential as roads, utilities, and public safety. High-speed internet determines whether residents can work, learn, access healthcare, and participate fully in today's digital economy. Tracking broadband availability and speeds shows whether Putnam County's infrastructure is keeping pace with modern expectations and whether all residents have equitable access to the opportunities that depend on reliable connectivity.

Source: FCC.gov