

**Targeted Employment Areas as Defined by the EB-5 Investor Visa Program  
(Updated March 2019)**

The lists below identify areas in the State of Florida that currently qualify as Targeted Employment Areas (TEAs) as defined by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) EB-5 Investor Visa Program. The definition of a TEA is: **1.** A rural area or **2.** A non-rural area that has experienced high unemployment (150.0 percent of the national average unemployment rate during a comparable 12-month period).

Rural areas are defined as those counties not located within a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) or within a city or town with a population of 20,000 or more. Current MSA definitions were published by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget in February 2013. Counties in Florida that qualify as rural areas under this provision include:

Bradford County	Lafayette County
Calhoun County	Levy County
Columbia County	Liberty County
DeSoto County	Madison County
Dixie County	Balance of Monroe County (Monroe County excluding Key West City)
Franklin County	Okeechobee County
Glades County	Putnam County
Hamilton County	Suwannee County
Hardee County	Taylor County
Hendry County	Union County
Holmes County	Washington County
Jackson County	

High unemployment areas are defined as non-rural areas (entire MSAs; component counties of multicounty MSAs; or cities with populations of 20,000 or more) with unemployment rates at least 150.0 percent higher than the national average for the most recent calendar year available. For calendar year 2018, the national unemployment rate averaged 3.9 percent --a non-rural area qualifies as a high unemployment area if its 2018 annual average rate was at least 5.9 percent. Areas in Florida that qualify as high unemployment areas under this provision include:

Fort Pierce City (in St. Lucie County)—6.4 percent

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER) is the agency authorized to certify TEAs in Florida. WSER can provide unemployment estimates for smaller geographies such as Census tracts to determine TEA eligibility and can provide verification letters by request. Please note:

- A state-issued TEA verification letter is not required for rural or high unemployment areas specifically listed above or for estimates from alternate data sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau.
- State-issued TEA designations are not binding on USCIS and the final decision to accept or reject state-issued TEA designations is at the discretion of USCIS.
- Requests for TEA verification letters should be one of the last steps in the EB-5 application process to insure that the latest available annual unemployment estimates are used and to avoid multiple revisions.

If you have questions or require additional information about the TEA status of an area, please contact Jimmy Heckman ([james.heckman@deo.myflorida.com](mailto:james.heckman@deo.myflorida.com)) at (850) 245-7233. More information about the EB-5 Investor Visa Program can be found on the USCIS website ([www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)).