

The Florida CORPORATE RELOCATION GUIDE



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OUR FIRM

For decades, individuals have relocated their families and their businesses to take advantage of Florida's warm weather and favorable taxes, and for nearly a century, Williams Parker has counseled generations of those families and their businesses.

Sarasota's attractive business climate offers low costs, excellent tax and economic incentives, and no personal income tax. At Williams Parker, we advise executives and their businesses that have relocated or seek to relocate their national or international headquarters to our region.

The firm exists to help our clients implement their visions for their businesses. We practice in the legal disciplines that align with our client base. In those disciplines, we have built national-caliber capabilities, offering sophisticated corporate, M&A, tax, finance, employment, real estate, intellectual property, healthcare, and business litigation. Through the years we have expanded our ranks to meet our clients' growing and complex needs, maintaining a single office location in downtown Sarasota to create operating efficiencies for our clients and to maintain our hallmark collegiality.

We are hard-working, fair-minded, and community-centered professionals who support and collaborate with one another. Over 70 percent of our attorneys have at least one advanced degree in taxation, accounting, business, or medicine, or are board certified by The Florida Bar as specialists in their areas of practice. Our attorneys and staff include native Floridians as well as "transplants." Every one of us lives and works here because of the quality of life in our region is second to none. It is our pleasure to share with you the many advantages of Florida.



The Florida Advantage

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Tax Benefits

NO STATE PERSONAL INCOME TAX

Florida is one of only seven states in the country without an individual income tax. For individual owners of sole proprietorships, partnerships, S corporations, or most limited liability companies, income from these businesses will not be subject to Florida income tax. Florida employees will likewise benefit since they are not required to pay Florida income tax on their wages.

5.5 PERCENT CORPORATE INCOME TAX RATE

Business entities that are taxed as a C corporation for federal income tax purposes and that are doing business or earning income in Florida must generally file a Florida corporate income tax return and pay Florida corporate income tax on the portion of the corporation's net income that is apportioned to Florida under Florida tax law. Such Florida net income in excess of \$50,000 is generally taxed at a flat 5.5 percent rate, which is at the low end of the range for state corporate income tax rates.

S CORPORATIONS EXEMPT FROM FLORIDA CORPORATE INCOME TAX

Corporations that have elected to be taxed as S corporations for federal income tax purposes are generally not subject to Florida corporate income tax.

NO TAX ON INVENTORY OR GOODS IN TRANSIT

Business inventories are exempt from Florida taxes on tangible personal property. Additionally, personal property manufactured or produced out of state and brought into Florida that has not yet reached its final destination is not taxed for up to 180 days.

NO ANNUAL FRANCHISE TAX ON STOCK OR EQUITY

Florida further reduces the corporate tax burden by not imposing a franchise tax on entities registered to conduct business in the state. Franchise tax, also known as a privilege tax, is often levied for the privilege of incorporating or registering to transact business in a state and can be a substantial tax liability on businesses. However, Florida has no such tax generally applicable to corporations.

NO STATE-LEVEL AD VALOREM OR PROPERTY TAX

Ad valorem taxes are taxes that are based on the value of property. The Florida Constitution specifically provides there will not be state-level ad valorem or property taxes on real estate or tangible personal property. Although ad valorem taxes may be levied by local governments and the state may impose user fees, avoiding state-level ad valorem taxes still has its perks. For example, over half of the states in the country charge a tax on vehicle ownership based on the value of the vehicle, while Florida only charges a modest annual fee in lieu of an ad valorem tax.

SALES AND USE TAX ADVANTAGES

In addition to giving breaks on corporate income tax, Florida has supplementary tax advantages for state sales and use taxes. Sales taxes are applied to the sale or rental of goods in the state, with Florida levying 6 percent in addition to local sales taxes, which generally range from 0.5 percent to 2 percent. Sales tax is also imposed on the lease of commercial property and the short-term rental of residential property. Use tax is paid on internet and out-of-state purchases that are used, consumed, or stored in-state. However, Florida provides numerous exemptions to state sales and use tax, including:

- Sales and use tax exemptions on the labor component of qualified research and development
- Sales and use tax exemptions on certain machinery and equipment used in manufacturing
- Sales and use tax exemptions for electricity used in the manufacturing process

PROPERTY TAXES

The millage rate is the tax per \$1,000 of taxable property value and is set annually by taxing authorities such as the Board of County Commissioners, School Board, cities, and other special districts. These taxes fund a wide variety of public services, including education, water management, mosquito control, and fire rescue.



Regional Assets

Situated south of Tampa on Florida's Gulf Coast, Sarasota and Manatee counties benefit from proximity to a number of regional assets. In addition to providing access to the Caribbean, Central and South American markets, and the Panama Canal gateway to the Pacific Rim, the Sarasota area is within 90 miles of four international airports and two of Florida's deep-water ports—Port Manatee and Port of Tampa Bay.

The Tampa Bay Partnership galvanizes the business and political leadership of the area to exert its collective influence on the policies, programs, and projects that enhance the economic competitiveness and prosperity of the region. It is supported by more than 120 private investors, public partners, and community stakeholders from the counties of Sarasota, Manatee, and six others.

Sarasota and Manatee counties are part of Florida's High Tech Corridor, a regional economic development initiative connected by three research universities, more than 20 local and regional economic development organizations, 14 community and state colleges, 12 regional workforce boards, countless industry groups, and thousands of the region's innovative companies. Its mission is to grow the area's high-tech industry through partnerships that support research, marketing, workforce, and entrepreneurship.

Local Incentives

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

Sarasota and Manatee counties have established economic development incentive programs that are designed to help retain existing businesses, assist those that want to expand, and help attract new businesses that are considering relocating to the area.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AD VALOREM TAX EXEMPTION

Available in unincorporated Sarasota County and the cities of Sarasota, Venice, and North Port, the ad valorem tax exemption is an incentive program designed to encourage new businesses to relocate or existing businesses to expand and create new jobs in the region. The program authorizes the county to grant qualifying businesses an ad valorem tax exemption of up to 100 percent for up to 10 years.

RAPID PERMITTING PROGRAMS

Sarasota and Manatee counties have developed fast-track permitting programs to allow targeted industry companies wishing to expand or relocate in the area to expedite the permitting process. The programs are not meant to eliminate or circumvent existing land use regulations or construction standards, only to accelerate the process by making certain determinations and decisions about the development of the land and facilities in a more expeditious manner.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING

In order to help businesses grow, CareerSource Suncoast, a private, nonprofit corporation, provides workforce solutions for talent recruitment and development. Its programs include employed worker training and on-the-job training programs for qualifying employees.

ROAD IMPACT FEE MITIGATION

Designed to assist businesses that will benefit the local economy, the Road Impact Fee Mitigation allows the county to mitigate up to 100 percent of the road impact fees. A formal application and approval by the Sarasota County Commission are required.



State Incentives

THE QUALIFIED TARGET INDUSTRY TAX REFUND PROGRAM

This award provides a \$3,000-\$7,000 per-job tax refund for companies that create high-wage jobs in targeted, high-value industries. This incentive includes refunds on corporate income, sales, ad valorem, intangible personal property, insurance premiums, and certain other taxes.

THE QUALIFIED DEFENSE CONTRACTORS TAX REFUND PROGRAM

This program is intended to preserve and grow Florida's high-technology employment base, giving Florida companies a competitive edge as defense contractors consolidate defense contracts, acquire new contracts, or convert to commercial production. Pre-approved projects receive tax refunds of up to \$5,000 per job created or saved in Florida. Projects must be supported by their communities, which provide funding for 20 percent of the incentive.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRANSPORTATION FUND

Referred to as the "Road Fund," this provides local governments with funding for transportation-related projects required to induce companies to locate, remain, or expand within the local government's jurisdiction.

HIGH IMPACT PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE (HIPI) GRANT

A negotiated incentive used to attract and grow major high-impact facilities in Florida, HIPI grants are provided to pre-approved applicants in certain high-impact sectors. Once approved, the high-impact business is awarded 50 percent of the eligible grant upon commencement of operations and the other half once full employment and capital investment goals are met.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT TAX CREDIT

This is an annual credit against the corporate income tax, which is available for up to 20 years in an amount equal to 5 percent of the eligible capital costs generated by a qualifying project. Eligible capital costs include all expenses incurred in the acquisition, construction, installation, and equipping of a project, from the beginning of construction to the commencement of operations. Available to businesses in HIPI-designated sectors, such businesses must make an investment of at least \$100 million to receive the full credit.

QUICK RESPONSE TRAINING GRANT

This is an employer-driven training program designed to assist new value-added businesses and provide existing Florida businesses the necessary training for expansion. A state educational facility—community college, area technical center, school district, or university—is available to assist with application and program development or delivery. The educational facility will also serve as fiscal agent for the project. The company may use in-house training, outside vendor training programs, or the local educational entity to provide training.

INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING GRANT

The program provides training to currently employed workers to keep Florida's workforce competitive in a global economy and to retain existing businesses. The program is available to all Florida businesses that have been in operation for at least one year prior to application and require skills-upgrade training for existing employees. Priority is given to businesses in targeted industries, rural areas, distressed areas, and Brownfield or Hub zones.

FLORIDA FIRST BUSINESS BOND POOL

This program reserves 20 percent of Florida's total annual private activity bond allocation for large industrial projects making significant contributions to Florida's economy. Florida also reserves a portion of the total allocation to assist small manufacturers in obtaining very cost-effective financing for expansion or relocation projects, if allocation is not available from the Manufacturing Facilities Bond Pool.



ENTERPRISE ZONE PROGRAM

This program encourages the revitalization of economically distressed areas in Florida by providing credits against Florida's sales tax or corporate income tax to businesses located in an enterprise zone for hiring zone residents. Corporate income tax credits are available for businesses that construct or expand their facilities within a zone. Sales tax refunds are available when businesses purchase business equipment or building materials for use within a zone. Local governments can provide additional incentives for a zone located within their boundaries.

THE COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

The program encourages private-sector donations to community redevelopment projects in enterprise zones and to low-income housing projects. A tax credit of 50 percent of the donation is allowed.

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY INCENTIVES

Florida offers increased incentive awards and lower wage qualification thresholds for businesses in rural counties, urban areas, and Brownfield sites.

SEMICONDUCTOR, SPACE, AND DEFENSE SALES AND USE TAX EXEMPTION

This is used to attract and grow businesses in these sectors by providing an exemption for all sales and use taxes on investments in machinery and equipment used in manufacturing and research.

RECYCLING LOAN PROGRAM

The program was created to provide access to capital for the purchase of equipment and machinery to expand recycling capacity in Florida. The program offers long-term fixed-rate loans at interest rates up to 2 percent below prime. The maximum loan amount is \$200,000. The program is limited to for-profit small businesses that are either legally licensed and operating in Florida, creditworthy start-up companies, or out-of-state firms considering expansions into Florida. Eligible recycling companies must have a net worth less than \$6 million and have fewer than 100 employees.

Business Assistance

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is a public and private partnership focused on diversifying and sustaining a local economy that is globally competitive. A rich resource for entrepreneurs considering sites for new enterprise, as well as for existing business owners exploring relocation or expansion, the EDC provides a variety of business assistance programs. It works to attract and retain high-wage jobs for area residents and connect existing businesses to the resources needed to succeed. For more information about starting, expanding, or relocating a business, contact the Sarasota County or Bradenton Area EDC.

Sarasota County EDC
edcsarasotacounty.com
(941) 309-1200

Bradenton Area EDC
bradentonareaedc.com
(941) 803-9030

CAREERSOURCE SUNCOAST

This resource provides recruiting, training, and research services to help companies hire and retain the best workers. Visit www.careersourcesuncoast.com for more information.

CAREEREDGE FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE

Using donated funds to create a skilled labor pool in the Manatee-Sarasota region, this organization helps local employers find the talent they need. Learn more at www.careeredgefunders.org.

GROWFL

GrowFL is a low-to-no-cost program designed to help the area's high-growth companies. It provides qualifying companies with core strategy reviews, strategic research, referrals, and other targeted services. More information about GrowFL is available at www.growfl.com.



FLORIDA VIRTUAL ENTREPRENEUR CENTER

The Florida Virtual Entrepreneur Center is an online directory of resource agencies that serve entrepreneurs at each stage of business. For more information, visit www.flvec.com.

FLORIDA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The Florida Small Business Development Center assists existing and emerging businesses in Sarasota and Manatee counties with professional business consulting, training, and information. Services include no-cost, confidential business consulting from certified experts in a variety of business topics, including marketing, business certification, capital access, market diversification, developing strategic business plans, export services, and web optimization. To schedule an appointment, visit www.SBDCTampaBay.com or call (813) 905-5800.

Site Selection

Sarasota and Manatee counties provide a variety of options to locate your business, including office space, business parks, and special districts. Some areas offer various incentives for qualifying businesses within the districts. The Sarasota EDC and Bradenton Area EDC offer a comprehensive and updated database of the area's available properties.

Sustainability

Eco-friendly and sustainable practices and environmental responsibility are increasingly important for companies. Sarasota County has earned a statewide and national reputation over the past decade as one of the top sustainable counties in the United States, fostering a specialized economy of environmental, clean technology, and green innovation businesses. Sarasota and Manatee counties have both earned designations from the Florida Green Local Government.

Establishing a Business in Florida

If you are considering moving an existing business to Florida, you have two options: you can maintain your registration in your existing state and qualify your business in Florida, or you can re-domesticate your business in Florida. In addition to any state-level requirements, local permits may also be required for your business.

Registering a business in Florida may require an entity to register not only at the state level but also with the local county government. Florida counties and most municipalities require a local business tax receipt or local business license (formally referred to as an occupational license) for businesses. For additional information on who needs to register with whom, visit www.sunbiz.org/register and also check the website for each county and municipality where your business has a location or employees for information.

SARASOTA COUNTY

scgov.net

MANATEE COUNTY

mymanatee.org

CITY OF SARASOTA

sarasotafl.gov

CITY OF BRADENTON

cityofbradenton.com



Local Amenities

EDUCATION

Sarasota and Manatee counties recognize the importance of a quality education and, therefore, offer an abundance of educational options at all levels, including the following higher education institutions: Argosy University, Eckerd College, Everglades University, Florida State University, Florida State University Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training, Keiser University, New College of Florida, Ringling College of Art and Design, State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota, University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee, Webster University, and Sarasota County Technical Institute. To further explore the comprehensive selection of four-year colleges, universities, and higher education institutions in our region, visit www.collegeatlas.org.

Additionally, Sarasota County's K-12 programs have been ranked as an "A" District by the Florida Department of Education. If you are moving to the area and have school-aged children, here are some helpful resources:

School District of Sarasota County
1960 Landings Blvd.
Sarasota, FL 34231
(941) 927-9000
www.sarasotacountyschools.net

School District of Manatee County
215 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, FL 34205
(941) 708-8770
www.manateeschools.net

There are also many private schools in the area, with varying application deadlines and admissions standards. If you are considering a move to Florida, we recommend contacting any schools that you are interested in as soon as possible to obtain further details. For a complete listing, visit www.floridaschoolchoice.org.

HEALTHCARE

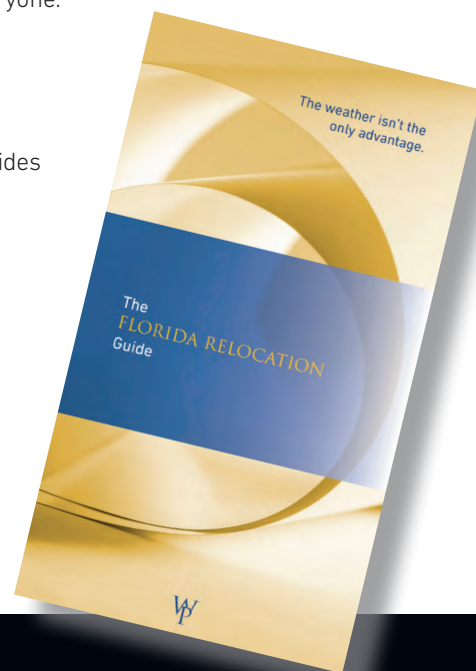
Sarasota and Manatee counties provide a reputable network of hospitals and healthcare providers. The area's medical centers are well-known for their specialty care and high-quality services. Among the area's facilities are Sarasota Memorial Health Care System, which features a level II trauma center and is the only hospital in Florida with the federal government's five-star rating for quality and safety, Doctors Hospital of Sarasota, All Children's Specialty Care of Sarasota, and HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Sarasota. For additional information on area healthcare facilities, visit www.FloridaHealthFinder.gov.

COMMUNITY

The quality of life in our region is second to none. Known as Florida's "Cultural Coast," Sarasota is renowned for its wealth of arts and culture. Whether you are attracted to our thriving cultural institutions, global cuisine, or gorgeous white sand beaches, the Sarasota area has something to offer everyone. For additional information, visit www.visitsarasota.com.

Establishing Domicile

Williams Parker also publishes a *Florida Relocation Guide* that provides practical and relevant information for individuals establishing domicile in Florida. Visit our website to view or contact us to request a copy.



A photograph of two Great Egrets in a nest. The birds are perched on a branch, surrounded by green foliage. They have long, thin necks, yellow beaks, and long, wispy plumes. The background is a clear blue sky.

Insights

You may read and subscribe to our blogs on the topics of Business & Tax, Intellectual Property, Labor & Employment, and Real Estate at: WilliamsParker.com/Insights

Governmental Resources

CITY OF BRADENTON

cityofbradenton.com

CITY OF SARASOTA LOCAL BUSINESS TAX

1565 1st Street
Annex Building 2nd Floor
Sarasota, FL 34236
(941) 263-6469

CITY OF NORTH PORT BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Local Business Tax
4970 City Hall Boulevard
North Port, FL 34286
(941) 429-7044

CITY OF VENICE BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Local Business Tax
401 W. Venice Avenue
Venice, FL 34285
(941) 486-2626

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

floridarevenue.com

MANATEE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

1112 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, FL 34205
(941) 748-4501

MANATEE COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR

Lakewood Ranch Branch
6007 111th St E, Bradenton, FL 34211
(941) 741-4800

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

1001 Sarasota Center Boulevard
Sarasota, FL 34240
(941) 861-6678

4000 S. Tamiami Trail
Venice, FL 34293
(941) 861-7400

SARASOTA COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR

101 S. Washington Boulevard
Sarasota, FL 34236
(941) 861-8300

TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY

501 Bay Isles
Longboat Key, FL 34228
(941) 316-1999

LOCAL IRS OFFICE

5971 Cattleridge Boulevard
Sarasota, FL 34232
(800) 829-1040
irs.gov/businesses

Visit myflorida.com/taxonomy/business
for a full listing of state agencies.

Business Organizations

In addition to the Sarasota EDC and Bradenton Area EDC, several organizations exist within Sarasota and Manatee counties to provide assistance and resources to the area's businesses. Following is a list of some local organizations that may prove helpful.

ARGUS FOUNDATION

argusfoundation.org
(941) 365-4886

CAREERSOURCE SUNCOAST

www.careersourcesuncoast.com

GREATER SARASOTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

sarasotachamber.com
(941) 955-8187

GULF COAST BUILDERS EXCHANGE

gcbx.org
(941) 907-7745

GULF COAST CEO FORUM

gulfcoastceoforum.com

LAKWOOD RANCH BUSINESS ALLIANCE

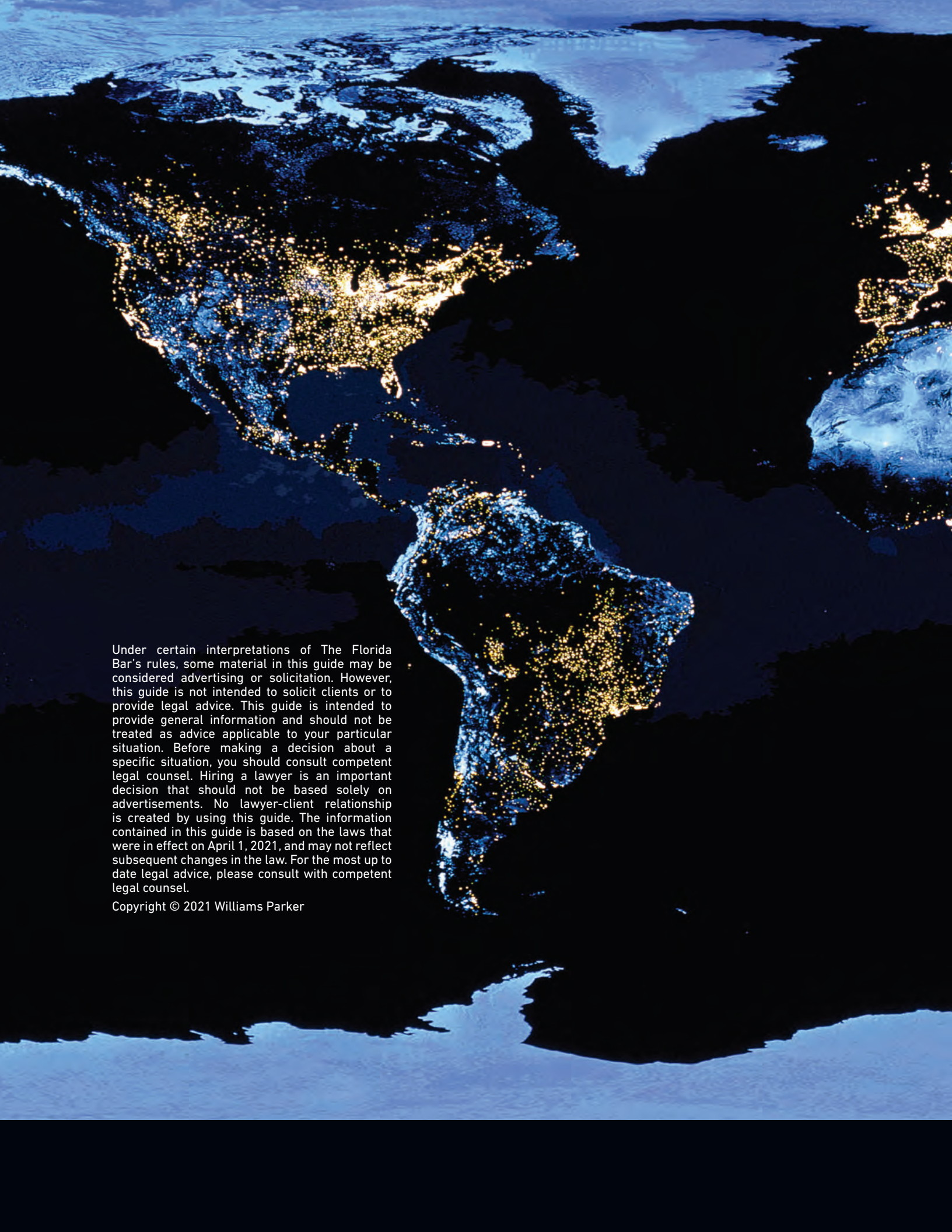
lwrba.org
(941) 757-1664

MANATEE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

manateechamber.com
(941) 748-3411

SARASOTA-MANATEE MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

sama-fl.com
(941) 376-4272



Under certain interpretations of The Florida Bar's rules, some material in this guide may be considered advertising or solicitation. However, this guide is not intended to solicit clients or to provide legal advice. This guide is intended to provide general information and should not be treated as advice applicable to your particular situation. Before making a decision about a specific situation, you should consult competent legal counsel. Hiring a lawyer is an important decision that should not be based solely on advertisements. No lawyer-client relationship is created by using this guide. The information contained in this guide is based on the laws that were in effect on April 1, 2021, and may not reflect subsequent changes in the law. For the most up to date legal advice, please consult with competent legal counsel.

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Global Reach

Williams Parker is proud to enjoy global reach as Florida's exclusive member of Ally Law, an elite legal alliance that includes nearly 3,000 attorneys spanning more than 100 leading business centers in 45 countries, to help our clients address their global legal needs. The network provides connections to global markets through local attorneys who understand their communities' business climates and cultures. Each firm in the network goes through a rigorous vetting process and abides by the International Bar Association's International Code of Ethics. Clients can access local legal counsel in foreign jurisdictions at local market rates, capitalize on a shared commitment to top-notch legal advice and service, and benefit from a full range of the most highly qualified attorneys in the world. From the complexities of expansion into foreign markets, interpreting international tax treaties, international litigation and arbitration, mergers and acquisitions involving non-US entities, and joint manufacturing or distribution arrangements with non-US entities, to labor and employment matters outside of the United States, we work regularly with Ally Law attorneys to address clients' needs outside of our region.

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Partner

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REAL ESTATE
LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT
ESTATE PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION
FIDUCIARY SERVICES
TAX PLANNING
BUSINESS SUCCESSION
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS & CROSS-BORDER TRANSACTIONS
CORPORATE
LABOR & EMPLOYMENT
HEALTHCARE
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
LITIGATION

