



MEDC RISE 2026

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

**MEDC
RISE 2026
CONFERENCE**

EMPOWERING MINORITY BUSINESSES.
BUILDING A STRONGER TOMORROW.

**CONNECT
COLLABORATE &
CREATE OPPORTUNITY**

Join business leaders and industry experts to explore contract opportunities at the MEDC RISE 2026 Conference.

- NETWORK**
Build meaningful connections
- COLLABORATE**
Discover partnership opportunities
- GROW**
Take your business to the next level

PEOPLE • PARTNERSHIPS • PROSPERITY

CONNECT | COLLABORATE | CREATE OPPORTUNITY

OCTOBER 29–30, 2026

Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore

2225 N Lois Avenue • Tampa, Florida 33607

MEDC RISE 2026 | PEOPLE • PARTNERSHIPS • PROSPERITY

WELCOME TO THE MEDC RISE 2026 CONFERENCE

Resilient • Inclusive • Sustainable Economic Growth

Welcome to the MEDC RISE 2026 Conference, a gathering designed to connect business leaders, public agencies, corporate partners, and entrepreneurs around practical opportunities for growth.

Across two days, RISE brings together recognition, inspiration, procurement conversations, supplier connections, and business-to-business relationship building. Our goal is to help businesses meet decision-makers, understand pathways to contracting, and build partnerships that support a stronger Tampa Bay economy.

PEOPLE

PARTNERSHIPS

PROSPERITY

AT A GLANCE

DATES

Thursday–Friday, October 29–30, 2026

VENUE

Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore
2225 N Lois Avenue, Tampa, FL 33607

DAY 1

MEDC Annual Recognition Awards with Keynote Speaker Shaquem Griffin
6:00–9:00 PM (Check-in @ 5:30 PM)

DAY 2

CEOs Mastermind Breakfast, Opportunity Zones, Special Session for Purchasing Offices, and Sponsors & Partners Expo (Check-in @ 8:00 am)



CONFIRMED ORGANIZATIONS

 CONSTRUCTION & DEVELOPMENT	SKANSKA	RYAN Companies	AVID RESTORATION	BRICKELL CAPITAL FINANCE	HAWK-ARROW
	FICK CONSTRUCTION	BAYBOT DYNAMICS	PREFERRED BUILDING SOLUTIONS	C&S COMPANIES	lane
 GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC SECTOR	Hillsborough County Procurement	POLK COUNTY	st.petersburg www.stpete.org	City of Tampa Florida	Hillsborough County PUBLIC SCHOOLS
	TGH Tampa General Hospital	MOFFITT CANCER CENTER	HART Hillsborough Area Regional Transit		
 HEALTHCARE & TRANSPORTATION					
 FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	Suncoast Credit Union	PNC BANK	agte financial	First Citizens Bank	JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.
				WELLS FARGO	
 CONSTRUCTION & TRANSPORTATION	HORUS			Tampa International Airport	

DAY 1 • THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

Recognition • Inspiration • Community

6:00 PM – 9:00 PM | Check-in at 5:30 PM

MEDC Annual Recognition Awards & Keynote

An evening celebrating achievement, leadership, and the businesses and partners helping build a more resilient and inclusive regional economy.

Featured Keynote Speaker: Shaquem Griffin

Former NFL linebacker, entrepreneur, author, and motivational speaker Shaquem Griffin shares a story of perseverance, adaptability, and turning challenges into opportunity. His keynote theme, “Pain to Purpose,” offers a roadmap for transforming setbacks into comebacks and losses into lessons.

Speaker profile

Griffin played four seasons in the NFL with the Seattle Seahawks and Miami Dolphins before retiring in 2022. His recognition includes the 2018 NFL Game Changer Award, the 2019 NCAA Inspiration Award, and a Sports Emmy Award. He is the author of *Inseparable* and co-founder of Consumer Launch Pad and Y.O.U. Adapt.

Evening focus

- Celebrate business and community leadership.
- Be inspired by a message of resilience, grit, and purposeful action.
- Make introductions that can continue into Day 2’s procurement and partnership sessions.

DAY 2 • FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30

Connections • Procurement • Growth

*****Exhibitor setup: Please bring your tablecloth and set up on the evening of October 29th OR at 7:30 AM on October 30th. Breakdown between 2:00 – 3:00 PM**

TIME	PROGRAM	DETAILS
8:30–9:45 AM	CEOs Mastermind Breakfast	Transportation, Innovation & Economic Growth
10:00 AM–3:00 PM	Opportunity Zones–Procurement Speaker Schedule	Scheduled agency and partner sessions listed on the next page.
10:00 AM–3:00 PM	Sponsors & Partners Expo	Meet participating public agencies, corporations, and business partners.
12:15–1:15 PM	Luncheon with Monica Cupid	Luncheon with an impactful speaker.
12:00 – 1:15 PM	Luncheon: Built to Rise: Resilience in Supply Chain Ecosystems	A special session for public and private purchasing officers

OPPORTUNITY ZONES • PROCUREMENT

Note: The schedule presents two parallel zones with a Procurement Speaker or financial services speaker or other for respective organizations. (Note: Speaker schedule may change in case of unforeseen circumstances).

TIME	ZONE 1	ZONE 2
10:00 AM	Tampa Airport	Polk County
10:30 AM	HART	PNC Bank (<i>Fraud & Cyberspace</i>)
11:00 AM	Tampa General Hospital	RYAN Companies
11:30 AM	Silent Partner	Hillsborough County Public Schools
1:30 PM	Hillsborough County Procurement	First Citizens Bank (<i>Succession Planning</i>)
2:00 PM	Lane Construction	Skanska USA
	-	-

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Leadership across business, technology, workforce development, and community impact



Shaquem Griffin • Keynote speaker • October 29

Former NFL Linebacker • Motivational Speaker • Author • Entrepreneur

Shaquem Griffin is a former NFL linebacker whose story of perseverance and resilience has inspired audiences worldwide. After playing with the Seattle Seahawks and Miami Dolphins, he built a career as a motivational speaker and entrepreneur. He is an author of *Inseparable*, co-founder of Consumer Launch Pad and Y.O.U. Adapt, and creator of The Locker Room Playbook curriculum. His keynote, “Pain to Purpose,” focuses on turning adversity into motivation and action.



Robert “Bob” James • CEOs Mastermind Breakfast • October 30

Founder & CEO, RJ Innovation Inc. • Transportation technology and AI

Bob James leads RJ Innovation Inc., a Tampa Bay deep-tech company developing URGN™, an ultra-wideband micropositioning platform designed to provide precise location where GPS falls short. His career includes senior engineering and leadership roles at HNTB, First Transit, and NJ Transit. At NJ Transit, his Innovation Train program earned IDC’s Best in Future of Digital Innovation award and approximately \$22 million in grants. He also teaches AI for Business and AI for Transportation.



Ivelisse Rivera • CEOs Mastermind Breakfast • October 30

Founder & President/CEO, Florida Aerospace Training Center

Ivelisse Rivera founded Florida Aerospace Training Center to strengthen the aviation workforce through practical education and accessible career pathways. The center provides hands-on avionics training, including electrical fundamentals, aircraft wiring, and troubleshooting, while preparing students for the FCC General Radiotelephone Operator License examinations. Her youth outreach includes summer camps, STEM workshops, Girls Achieving Leadership in Aviation, and community and scholarship initiatives.



Monica Cupid, MBA • Luncheon speaker • October 30

President & CEO, Florida Business Development Council

Monica Cupid is a nonprofit executive and development professional with more than two decades of experience in organizational leadership, grant development, and community impact. As President & CEO of the Florida Business Development Council, she brings experience in operational strategy, grant funding, contract monitoring, donor cultivation, program evaluation, and organizational performance. She previously served as Vice President of Operations and as an adjunct instructor at Broward College.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS & PARKING

Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore • October 29–30, 2026

Hotel address

Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore, 2225 N. Lois Avenue, Tampa, FL 33607

Book your hotel room

Use the Hilton reservation link below to book for the conference dates, October 29–30, 2026. The supplied parking instructions state that the preferential hotel rate is available until October 23rd, 2026.

BOOK HOTEL ROOM @ \$ 125 / night until 10/27

<https://www.hilton.com/en/book/reservation/rooms/?ctyhocn=TPAAHHF&arrivalDate=2026-10-29&departureDate=2026-10-30&groupCode=90U&room1NumAdults=1&cid=OM%2CWW%2CHILTONLINK%2CEN%2CDirectLink>

Parking instructions

- All guests must register their vehicle by scanning the QR code at the hotel front desk.
- Use parking registration code: **SALES2026**.
- Complete vehicle registration during your hotel check-in / front-desk visit.

Please note: the preferential rate deadline shown in the supplied parking instructions is October 21, 2026. Room availability and rates are controlled by the hotel.

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Conference inquiries: Navin@Flmedc.org | 813-922-2809

SPONSORS

Thank you for investing in opportunity

MEDC extends its appreciation to the sponsors, corporate partners, public agencies, and community organizations supporting RISE 2026.



C&S Companies



City of St. Petersburg



HART



Lane Construction



Moffitt Cancer Center



PNC



RYAN Companies



Suncoast Credit Union



Versatile Tile & Marble



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PEOPLE • PARTNERSHIPS • PROSPERITY



We create places for people to thrive.

We use our broad expertise in development, design,
construction, management, and financing to create
inclusive spaces where diverse communities, people,
and businesses can thrive.

[RYANCOMPANIES.COM](https://ryancompanies.com)



**MINORITY ENTERPRISE
DEVELOPMENT CORP.**
PEOPLE | PARTNERSHIPS | PROSPERITY

**CONNECT
COLLABORATE &
CREATE OPPORTUNITY**

Join business leaders and industry experts to celebrate the leaders, businesses and organizations driving economic opportunity and lasting change in our region.

MEDC RISE 2026 CONFERENCE

BUILT *to* RISE: — RESILIENCE IN SUPPLY — CHAIN ECOSYSTEMS

SUSAN SCHWAMM
President and CEO of
A & P International, Inc.

ANA MARIA LOWERY
Founder of
Go to Market Impact

OCTOBER 30, 2026
FRIDAY | 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

**HILTON TAMPA
AIRPORT WESTSHORE**
Tampa, FL

PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS TO ATTEND
www.flmedc.org/upcoming-events/