

# Okaloosa County Florida





Okaloosa County is...

## **MANY VISIT FOR A WEEK, IT'S AN HONOR AND A PRIVILEGE TO STAY FOR A LIFETIME**

A natural playground for water adventure. The emerald waters and pristine white sands are a highlight for travelers to explore. Whether you live for water-soaked adventures, unwinding on the white sandy beaches or spending time inland - camping, paddling down a river, shopping or enjoying the arts, Okaloosa County is THE place to be.

The recreational activities found in Okaloosa County, are the reason visitors come back year after year. The sustainability, quality of life, strong economy and attainable housing are the reasons we call it home.

When you're not offshore fishing the Gulf of Mexico, enjoying a shoreline picnic or enjoying the natural wonders of the area, you may find yourself watching (or even coaching) youth sports, participating in local business associations, golfing, playing tennis or even lounging at a neighborhood barbecue.

In addition to a myriad of activities tied to the Gulf in the south end of the county, many residents enjoy world class golf, shopping and entertainment. In particular, music lovers enjoy Concerts in the Village produced by the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation and the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra - the Emerald Coast's premier, fully-professional orchestra that performs at the magnificent \$30 million Mattie Kelly Fine & Performing Arts Center at Northwest Florida State College.

Meanwhile, a short drive north, visitors and residents will find a historic "All American" downtown in Crestview, plentiful fresh produce from the many family farms located in this region, craft distilleries and miles of river rafting, canoeing and kayaking. Camping and hiking can be enjoyed in Blackwater River State Park and the Eglin Reservation.

## Fun Facts:

Okaloosa County has twenty-four miles of sugarwhite sandy beaches. The sand is so white and the sparkling waters become as clear as a swimming pool, due to beautiful quartz crystal, traveling and settling from the Appalachians. The sparkling sand, reflects the sunlight, creating that emerald-green hue on the water.

The municipalities making up Okaloosa County offer activities and benefits as diverse as our ecosystem from the beach to the forest and include the the cities of Crestview, Destin, Fort Walton Beach, Laurel Hill, Mary Esther, Niceville and Valparaiso and the towns of Cinco Bayou and Shalimar.

## GOVERNANCE / COUNTY COMMISSION

The purpose of Okaloosa County Government is to be responsive to citizens in providing an appropriate level of accessible services on a cost effective basis. Critical County values include the following: continual improvement of infrastructure; health, safety, and wellbeing of the citizens; preservation of natural resources; responsible economic development; leadership; and stewardship.

The County Commission consists of 5 individuals elected countywide. As a group, they provide a good cross section of the County with two from the more rural north and three from the more urban south. They are extremely proud to have the third lowest County tax rate in the state at 3.83 mills. As a group, the Commission has diverse backgrounds and operate collegially and come together on large and small projects alike.





The Okaloosa County 2019 population was estimated at 207,115. Labor Force: 104,320. Median Age: 36. Bachelor's Degree or higher: 30.66%. Median Household Income: 65,140. Commute Travel Time: 22 minutes. Housing: 81% more households own their home rather than rent. <https://florida-edc.org/okaloosa-county/demographics>

## CLIMATE

Summer High: the July high is around 91 degrees

Winter Low: the January low is 40

Rain: averages 66 inches of rain a year

Snow: averages 0 inches of snow a year

<https://www.bestplaces.net/climate/county/florida/okaloosa>

The annual BestPlaces Comfort Index for Okaloosa County is 7.1 (10=best), which means it is more comfortable than most places in Florida.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

Healthcare - Excellent Health Care choices with Quality Physicians, Private Practices, Medical Centers and Hospitals.

Real Estate - Okaloosa County provides vast opportunities in commercial and residential real estate. Its diversified characteristics meet the various needs of our growing community. Top 50 Best Performing Large Cities in America Milken Institute, 2018

Most Paycheck Friendly Places in Florida - Okaloosa #3 Smart Asset, 2017

Ten Best Cities for Young Entrepreneurs - Fort Walton Beach #5 MoneyRates.com, 2016

Best Places for Veteran Entrepreneurs - Fort Walton Beach #10 USAA & Hiring our Heroes, 2015

Ten Smoking-Hot Small Market Economies in the South - Okaloosa #5 Southern Business & Development, 2015 <https://florida-edc.org/okaloosa-county/quality-of-life>

## EDUCATION

The Okaloosa County School District has achieved a larger share of 'A' rated schools than any other Florida County. Today, the Okaloosa County School District serves approximately 30,000 students and operates 33 neighborhood public schools. Recognizing that education must be a seamless process that keeps the interest of the student squarely in mind, OCSD has established partnerships with Florida colleges and universities to provide additional opportunities and challenges for students.

- The University of Florida and University of West Florida: pre-engineering course work for middle and high school students
- The Florida State University College of Medicine and West Florida Area Health Education Center: science and math instruction for students starting in seventh grade
- Embry Riddle Aeronautical University: university-level aerospace studies.

## COMMERCE

Okaloosa County, Florida, also identified as the Crestview-Fort Walton Beach-Destin MSA, is well known for its sugar white sands, emerald green waters and diverse ecosystems, home to wildlife and loved by residents for recreation and leisure. The community is far more than just fun and games.

Eglin Air Force Base, the world's largest Air Force installation, hosts the headquarters of the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), the 96th Test Wing and the 33rd Fighter Wing (F-35 graduate flying and maintenance training wing) among others.

With research and testing at the forefront of activities taking place at Eglin, numerous technology and defense contractors have located here –including renowned powerhouses Boeing, BAE Systems, Lockheed Martin and L3 Technologies. All benefit from a pro-business local government and award-winning public schools (including Florida's first STEM-focused middle school). <https://florida-edc.org/okaloosa-county/demographics>





## **MILITARY PRESENCE**

The Community is a super supportive of the military and is united in its overwhelming sentiment for our troops. Eglin Air Force Base is by far the largest employer of the County between military personnel, defense contractors, and support services accounting for 78,757 jobs or 72% of the local economy. In addition to the billions of dollars in direct spending the economic churn is multiplied two more times in community economic impact. The military base is the County's largest land owner and is an agency the County works closely with for lease and operating agreements, training, mutual aid support, and other similar agreements.

## **WORKING FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY**

Okaloosa County has a variety of opportunities to serve the public ranging from Airports and aviation, a water utility, our Tourist Development Department to more tradition county government opportunities through administration, Public Works, Corrections, Public Safety, IT, and more. Our organization currently has roughly 950 different budgeted positions assigned to over 15 different functional areas so regardless of where your interests lie, there is likely a role for you.

We encourage you to visit our website to search for open position postings and to apply for those of interest to you. Join our team and help ensure that Okaloosa County remains a top place to live, work, play, and raise a family.

<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/okaloosa>