



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Junior Achievement of North Florida and Florida State College at Jacksonville Announce Long-Term Land Lease for JA Experiential Learning Center on Downtown Campus**

**JACKSONVILLE, FL - January 20, 2026** - Junior Achievement of North Florida (JANFL) and Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ) today announced a landmark partnership to establish the Junior Achievement Experiential Learning Center (ELC) on FSCJ's Downtown Campus through a 50-year land lease agreement. The collaboration represents a long-term investment in Jacksonville's students, workforce and regional economy.

Planned as a state-of-the-art, immersive facility, the JA Experiential Learning Center is projected to serve more than 30,000 students annually across the Northeast Florida region. Located in the heart of Downtown Jacksonville, the ELC will bring career-connected learning to life and will allow students to run businesses, earn paychecks, manage budgets and explore career pathways through hands-on simulations that bridge classroom learning with real-world application.

*"The ELC reflects what's possible when education, business and community come together around a shared goal: preparing young people for choice-filled futures," said Shannon Italia, President of Junior Achievement of North Florida. "This long-term partnership with FSCJ gives our community the foundation we need to build an experiential learning hub that strengthens student outcomes and supports a future-ready workforce. We're grateful to FSCJ for making this possible, and we're excited to invite the community to be part of what comes next."*

The ELC will build on JA's Florida state-aligned curriculum and nationally proven model. Through signature experiences such as JA BizTown® and JA Finance Park®, students will develop financial capability, workforce readiness skills and career confidence in an engaging, experiential environment.

FSCJ's Downtown Campus provides a unique setting for this opportunity. The ELC will create a continuum that connects elementary and secondary students to postsecondary education, career pathways and lifelong learning.

*"This partnership embodies FSCJ's commitment to serving as an educational anchor for our community," said FSCJ President John Avendano, Ph.D. "By welcoming the Junior Achievement Experiential Learning Center to our Downtown Campus, we are expanding exposure and opportunity for young students across Jacksonville while strengthening the connection between early learning, college and career."*

Designed as a regional hub for experiential learning, the JA ELC will also strengthen Jacksonville's talent pipeline by connecting students with local industries, employers and volunteers. Approximately 4,000 volunteers and 200+ companies are expected to engage annually, reinforcing the ELC's role as a catalyst for community and economic development.

The project is supported by a capital campaign and reflects JANFL's strategic focus on scaling impact, deepening community partnerships and delivering measurable outcomes for North Florida's youth.

Design and engineer planning for the ELC are underway, with construction targeted to begin in 2026 and a soft opening projected for fall 2027.

To learn more about the JA ELC or how to support this initiative, visit [janflelc.org](http://janflelc.org).

#### **About FSCJ**

Known as "the community's college," Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ) exists to provide equitable, high quality, success-driven learning experiences for our diverse community of students. Serving more than 45,000 students and awarding over 5,000 degrees and certificates on an annual basis, the College plays a significant role in supplying the region's employers with a highly skilled, educated workforce.

#### **About Junior Achievement of North Florida**

Junior Achievement of North Florida inspires and prepares young people to succeed in a global economy. JA's hands-on learning experiences focus on financial literacy, career readiness, and entrepreneurship—helping students build the skills, confidence, and mindset needed to pursue choice-filled futures and contribute to a stronger Northeast Florida.

For more information, visit [janfl.org](http://janfl.org).

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