

City of Orlando Innovation District Pilot Opportunities

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ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

The City of Orlando is transforming its buildings, land, infrastructure, and other public assets into real-world test environments for civic innovation. Through this effort, the City has partnered with Rally, Central Florida's civic innovation infrastructure, to source and manage pilots that drive measurable regional impact.

The Innovation District pilot program supports short-term, measurable experiments that strengthen Orlando's progress toward becoming a Future-Ready City. Each 90-day pilot is designed to answer one clear question: does this solution measurably improve the problem it aims to address? Results inform city leaders, residents, and innovators about what works, what does not, and how to build a stronger, more equitable Orlando.

A note on regional data: Orlando sits at the center of Central Florida's regional challenges. The data cited throughout this document reflects Orange County, tri-county, and regional-level conditions — because the issues these pilots address do not stop at city limits. In many cases, Orlando's residents, infrastructure, and service areas are the primary drivers of those regional numbers. Where City-specific data is available we use it. Where we cite regional data, it represents the broader ecosystem the City's pilots are designed to address — and the scale at which successful solutions will ultimately need to operate.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

What each pilot receives

- Up to \$5,000 in funding
- 90-day implementation and completion window
- Access to City partner assets, department coordination, and stakeholder engagement through the Innovation District network
- Rally oversight and support throughout pilot design, execution, and reporting

Who should apply

This opportunity is available to ventures (nonprofits, hybrids, and for-profits) that are current participants or alumni of Rally's Co-Creation Labs, Social Enterprise Accelerator, or Scale Up programs. Ventures not yet involved are encouraged to apply to those programs to access future pilot opportunities.

What your proposal must include

Submit all materials as a single PDF through the online submission form. Your PDF must follow the structure of the Venture Pilot Prep Guide and include:

- Concept Summary (up to 2 pages): describe your proposed solution, target users, beneficiaries, and expected results within 90 days
- Pilot Plan (up to 1 page): objectives, milestones, location, timeline, and a detailed budget not exceeding \$5,000
- Impact and Learning Plan (up to 1 page): define success indicators, data to be collected, and how results inform the City's understanding of the issue
- Team Overview (up to 1 page): bios and relevant experience

How proposals are evaluated

- ✓ Relevance and alignment to the specific RFP challenge

- ✓ Feasibility and readiness for 90-day testing
- ✓ Strength of the impact and learning plan
- ✓ Clear path to scale or replication
- ✓ Partnership fit with municipal or neighborhood stakeholders

Reporting requirements

Within 30 days of pilot completion, all awardees must submit a Pilot Summary Report documenting: activities conducted, data and outcomes, lessons learned, and recommendations for next steps. These findings help the City and Rally identify promising models for replication across the Innovation District network.

CHALLENGE AREA: CONNECTIVITY & DIGITAL DIVIDE

Nearly 29% of Orange County households lack home broadband access. The disparity is extreme by neighborhood — in Parramore (zip 32805), broadband usage falls to 40%, and in Azalea Park (zip 32807) it drops to 23.8%. Among households earning under \$30,000, just 57% subscribe to home broadband compared to 95% of those earning over \$100,000. Uneven infrastructure investment, affordability barriers, and digital literacy gaps — particularly among seniors and non-English speakers — drive this divide.

29%

Orange County households without home broadband — including Orlando neighborhoods

40%

Broadband usage in Parramore, Orlando (zip 32805)

57%

Broadband access for households under \$30K income (national, reflected locally)

RFP 1 Bridge the Digital Divide with Citywide Access Programs

Purpose of this pilot

Test whether proposed solutions expand digital access, affordability, or literacy among residents and small businesses in underserved areas.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Community Wi-Fi or mesh network installations in underserved neighborhoods
- Subsidy or incentive models for low-income households
- Digital literacy and skills training for seniors or residents without prior internet access
- Partnerships with ISPs or local businesses to extend coverage zones

RFP 2 Expand Community Wi-Fi, Fiber, and Mobile Connectivity

Purpose of this pilot

Test whether solutions improve reliable connectivity coverage in underserved zones, reducing gaps and enabling more equitable participation.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Public Wi-Fi extensions on city assets (parks, libraries, transit hubs)
- Portable connectivity hubs or smart kiosks for public areas
- Low-cost fiber or fixed wireless demonstration zones
- Data-driven mapping of digital access and usage patterns

RFP 3 Provide Unified Digital Resources for Civic Engagement

Purpose of this pilot

Evaluate whether new platforms, interfaces, or tools simplify how residents interact with city services and improve civic participation.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Digital hubs integrating permits, requests, and community feedback
- Multilingual or accessible digital service portals
- Chatbots or mobile apps that help residents navigate city services
- Tools for public feedback and participatory budgeting

CHALLENGE AREA: ENERGY TRANSITION & RESILIENCE

OUC — Orlando's primary utility — has identified water scarcity and energy demand growth as its top strategic challenges through 2035, with reliability and resilience as its first strategic priority. OUC's "Path to Clean Energy" and "Path to Alternative Water" are active multiyear investment programs. The region's dependence on centralized grid infrastructure creates vulnerability during severe weather events. Pilots in this area focus on improving energy reliability, reducing operating costs, and expanding access to affordable energy — outcomes that serve residents, municipal operations, and the utility alike.

270K+

OUC customer accounts across Orlando

10

Key industry drivers shaping OUC's 2035 strategy

Top 3

Ranked energy reliability among OUC's five strategic priorities

RFP 4 Achieve 100% Renewable Energy Citywide by 2050

Purpose of this pilot

Test whether proposed solutions advance reliable, affordable renewable energy generation or adoption at a measurable scale within Orlando.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Community solar or shared renewable models serving multifamily or low-income households
- Building-integrated solar demonstrations (rooftop, parking canopy, facade)
- Renewable micro-generation systems for public facilities or schools
- Resident engagement programs that increase renewable energy participation

RFP 5 Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions 90% from 2007 Levels by 2040

Purpose of this pilot

Test whether proposed solutions reduce energy use, lower operating costs, or improve efficiency in buildings, transport, or operations within 90 days.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Energy-efficiency retrofits or smart-building controls in municipal or community facilities
- EV charging behavior programs that shift energy loads to off-peak periods
- Shared-mobility or e-bike pilots reducing single-occupancy trips
- Energy tracking tools that help small businesses monitor and reduce consumption

RFP 6 Expand Energy Storage, Microgrids, and Low-Income Clean Energy Access

Purpose of this pilot

Evaluate whether short-term pilots improve energy reliability or access for low-income or high-risk users while reducing costs.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Small-scale battery or microgrid installations at community centers or resilience hubs
- Mobile energy-storage solutions for emergency response
- Solar-plus-storage demonstrations for affordable-housing developments
- Programs that lower barriers to clean-energy participation (leasing, subscription models)

CHALLENGE AREA: WATER SECURITY & QUALITY

The Floridan Aquifer — the primary water source for Central Florida — is under active management pressure. The St. Johns River Water Management District has established Minimum Flows and Levels on 129 waterbodies in the region, and 14 are currently in prevention or recovery status. The District's Central Florida Water Initiative covers Orange, Osceola, Polk, Seminole, and southern Lake counties. Orlando's 100+ lakes are vulnerable to nutrient runoff and flooding from impermeable urban surfaces. OUC's Strategy 2035 explicitly names water scarcity among its top 10 drivers of change.

129

Waterbodies with Minimum Flows and Levels across the SJRWMD region (includes Orlando)

14

Waterbodies currently in prevention or recovery status (regional)

100+

Lakes within Orlando city limits vulnerable to nutrient runoff and flooding

RFP 7 Reduce Water Consumption

Purpose of this pilot

Test whether proposed solutions measurably reduce water use at the household, building, or community level within 90 days.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Smart-meter analytics or leak-detection systems for municipal or multifamily sites
- Incentive programs for low-flow fixture retrofits
- Resident education or gamified conservation campaigns
- AI-enabled irrigation controllers for parks or schools

RFP 8 Improve Stormwater Management and Quality

Purpose of this pilot

Assess whether proposed solutions improve runoff quality or reduce localized flooding within 90 days.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Permeable pavement or bioswale demonstrations on city rights-of-way
- Smart sensors for stormwater basins and drains
- Rain-garden or green-roof prototypes capturing first-flush pollutants
- Data visualization tools showing stormwater performance in real time

RFP 9 Protect Residents from Severe Weather Events and Flooding

Purpose of this pilot

Test whether proposed solutions improve resilience or reduce vulnerability to flood and storm impacts.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Neighborhood-level flood-alert and communication systems
- Portable pumps or deployable flood-barrier demonstrations
- Nature-based flood-mitigation pilots such as wetland restoration or retention ponds
- Resilience-hub coordination platforms for emergency response

CHALLENGE AREA: MOBILITY & TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Progress is real but incomplete. Since adopting its first Vision Zero Action Plan in 2021, Orlando has achieved a 40% decrease in deadly and serious crashes. Despite this, 65 people were still killed while walking in the metro area in 2024, and more than 5 people are killed and 35 seriously injured every week on roads in Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties. Orlando ranked 25th most dangerous for pedestrians nationally in 2025, down from 8th in 2022. Car-dominant street design, limited transit options, and first/last-mile connectivity gaps remain structural barriers.

40%

Decrease in deadly and serious crashes in Orlando since 2021 Vision Zero adoption

65

Pedestrians killed in the Orlando metro area in 2024

25th

Orlando metro pedestrian fatality ranking in 2025 (was 8th in 2022)

RFP 10 Eliminate Traffic Deaths and Serious Injuries by 2040

Purpose of this pilot

Test whether proposed solutions reduce crash risk or improve safety behaviors on Orlando streets within a 90-day pilot period.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Temporary traffic-calming installations (painted bump-outs, pedestrian refuges, protected bike lanes)
- Smart crosswalk or signal-timing technology prioritizing pedestrians and cyclists
- Community safety campaigns or resident-led traffic audits
- Data dashboards tracking near-miss events or speed compliance

RFP 11 Expand Multimodal Options for Residents and Visitors

Purpose of this pilot

Evaluate whether pilot projects increase access, reduce travel costs, or encourage mode shift to transit, biking, walking, or shared mobility.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- First/last-mile e-scooter or bike-share partnerships linked to Lynx or SunRail stations
- Transit pass integration or payment tools across modes
- Neighborhood mobility hubs offering shared EVs or e-bikes
- Dynamic wayfinding apps that combine transit and active routes

RFP 12 Optimize Curb Space in High-Demand Corridors

Purpose of this pilot

Test whether proposed solutions improve curb management and reduce conflicts among users in busy districts.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Sensor-based curb usage tracking and dynamic pricing tools
- Designated delivery zones or pick-up/drop-off areas with digital reservations
- Micromobility corrals to organize scooters and bikes
- Real-time data dashboards for city traffic managers

CHALLENGE AREA: HOUSING & PLACEMAKING

A majority of renters in the Orlando metro area spend more than 30% of their income on rent, and 28% allocate more than half of their earnings to housing. The region has a deficit of 94,715 affordable and available housing units for low-income renter households. Seven Central Florida counties set record eviction filings in 2024, with more than 50% ending in tenant removal. The 2025 Point-in-Time Count found 2,781 people experiencing homelessness across the tri-county area, with 40% of that population being children and older adults. Over 1,000 students in Orange County Public Schools are living in cars or on the streets.

28%

Orlando metro renters spending more than half their income on housing

94,715

Affordable unit deficit for low-income renters in the Orlando metro (includes city)

2,781

People experiencing homelessness across Orange, Seminole, and Osceola counties (2025)

RFP 13 Increase Affordable, Green, and Resilient Housing Stock

Purpose of this pilot

Test whether pilot projects expand affordable, energy-efficient, or resilient housing options while reducing costs.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Modular or prefabricated construction pilots for workforce housing
- Energy-efficient retrofit programs for existing low-income units
- Green building materials that reduce construction costs
- Financing or ownership models that improve long-term affordability

RFP 14 Enhance Cultural and Social Vibrancy Through Placemaking

Purpose of this pilot

Assess whether new placemaking strategies increase community engagement, foot traffic, or cultural activity in targeted districts.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Temporary installations or pop-up markets highlighting local artists and entrepreneurs
- Creative lighting, landscaping, or signage to enhance public safety and identity
- Programming that fosters intergenerational or cross-cultural connection
- Tactical-urbanism projects co-designed with neighborhood groups

RFP 15 Advance Housing-First Solutions to Homelessness

Purpose of this pilot

Evaluate whether short-term pilots improve access to housing, stability, or supportive services for unhoused individuals and families.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Rapid re-housing or transitional housing models integrated with wraparound care
- Technology platforms that coordinate services and data-sharing among providers
- Employment, mental health, or case-management innovations tied to housing stability
- Resident-led approaches that improve long-term retention and wellbeing

CHALLENGE AREA: HEALTH & SAFETY

Nearly 14% of Orlando residents remain uninsured, and 13.2% of Orange County residents under 65 lack health coverage — among the highest uninsured rates of any major city in comparable analyses. Adults in Orange County reported an average of 5.66 mentally unhealthy days per month in 2025. Provider shortages in underserved neighborhoods, cost barriers, language and cultural access gaps, and fragmented service delivery are the primary drivers. As climate hazards intensify, the region also needs distributed resilience infrastructure that can serve vulnerable populations during emergencies.

13.9%

Orlando city residents without health insurance

5.66

Average mentally unhealthy days per month, Orange County adults (2025)

13.2%

Orange County residents under 65 without health coverage

RFP 16 Improve Healthcare and Mental Health Access

Purpose of this pilot

Test whether pilot initiatives expand access to physical or mental healthcare and improve service coordination or patient engagement within 90 days.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Mobile or pop-up health clinics offering screenings or consultations
- Telehealth platforms serving uninsured or low-income residents
- Behavioral-health integration pilots within community centers or schools
- Culturally competent outreach programs that reduce stigma around care

RFP 17 Enhance Public Safety in High-Need Neighborhoods

Purpose of this pilot

Assess whether proposed initiatives reduce incidents, increase perceptions of safety, or strengthen community collaboration within 90 days.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Violence-interruption programs or neighborhood mediation initiatives
- Improved lighting, cameras, or environmental-design strategies for safety
- Youth-engagement or mentorship pilots targeting at-risk populations
- Co-responder models combining law enforcement and mental-health staff

RFP 18 Build Resilience Hubs for Disaster Response

Purpose of this pilot

Evaluate whether pilot projects enhance disaster readiness or provide critical services during emergencies through new hub models, technologies, or partnerships.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Solar-plus-battery installations that maintain power during outages
- Emergency communications or resident check-in systems
- Stockpiling and distribution innovations for essential supplies
- Community training programs or digital resource maps for resilience hubs

CHALLENGE AREA: MATERIALS & ZERO WASTE

A University of Florida waste composition study at the Orange County Landfill found that food waste makes up 10.2% of Orange County's total municipal solid waste stream — roughly one in ten pounds of everything thrown away. Combined with other organics (3.4%) and animal by-products (1.8%), over 15% of the waste stream is organic material currently going to landfill. The Central District's constructed landfill capacity — which serves Orange County — is projected to be depleted between 2027 and 2028 at current disposal rates. Orange County Utilities is actively piloting a Food Waste Diversion program, signaling institutional readiness for innovation.

10.2%

Food waste as a share of Orange County's MSW stream (UF waste composition study)

15%+

Combined organics in Orange County's waste stream currently going to landfill

2027-28

Projected depletion of constructed landfill capacity serving Orange County

RFP 19 Diversify Recycling, Composting, and Materials Recovery

Purpose of this pilot

Evaluate whether proposed interventions increase participation and diversion rates or improve sorting accuracy in Orlando waste streams within 90 days.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Smart bins or sensor-enabled collection points that measure use or contamination
- Behavior-change or incentive programs that improve recycling participation
- Community composting pilots for multifamily or restaurant districts
- Data tools mapping waste generation and recovery flows

RFP 20 Deploy Waste-to-Energy and Anaerobic Digestion Pilots

Purpose of this pilot

Test whether pilot demonstrations can generate usable energy from waste streams while reducing landfill dependency.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Anaerobic digestion or biogas capture at food-service or institutional facilities
- Waste-to-energy micro-demonstrations integrating heat or power recovery
- Partnerships linking food-service businesses with organic-waste processors
- Measurement systems tracking landfill diversion and energy generation

RFP 21 Strengthen Community Education on Circular Economy

Purpose of this pilot

Evaluate whether educational or engagement interventions change resident recycling and reuse behaviors or improve understanding of circular-economy principles.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Community workshops or challenge campaigns promoting waste reduction
- School-based circular-economy curriculum pilots
- Storytelling or arts initiatives demonstrating material reuse
- Gamified digital apps rewarding sustainable choices

CHALLENGE AREA: LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

More than 143,000 Orange County residents experience food insecurity, with an annual food budget shortfall exceeding \$101 million. Over 90,000 Central Florida residents live in food deserts across 16 identified communities, including Parramore, South Apopka, Pine Hills, and parts of Osceola County. Grocery disinvestment, income inequality, limited transit access, and the high cost of local food distribution all contribute. The region's large hospitality and tourism economy generates significant food surplus that is largely unrecovered.

143K+

Orange County residents experiencing food insecurity (includes Orlando)

\$101M+

Annual food budget shortfall in Orange County

16

Food desert communities identified across Central Florida, including Orlando neighborhoods

RFP 22 Expand Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture

Purpose of this pilot

Test whether proposed interventions increase local food production or participation in community agriculture within 90 days.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Micro-farm or community-garden demonstrations on city-owned or partner properties
- Hydroponic or vertical-growing systems for schools or community centers
- Garden-to-cafeteria pilots linking local production to institutional food programs
- Resident-training or volunteer engagement models for sustainable maintenance

RFP 23 Strengthen Food Recovery and Compost Programs

Purpose of this pilot

Evaluate whether proposed pilots increase food recovery or compost participation and reduce landfill waste in 90 days.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Restaurant or grocery food-donation logistics pilots with local pantries
- Household or neighborhood compost-collection models
- Mobile apps or platforms coordinating real-time surplus recovery
- Education or incentive programs for separating organics

RFP 24 Increase Affordable Access to Healthy Food

Purpose of this pilot

Assess whether proposed pilots improve affordability or physical access to healthy food options within 90 days.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Mobile or pop-up grocery markets serving food-insecure neighborhoods
- SNAP doubling or voucher programs at local farmers markets
- Transit-linked food-access pilots connecting residents to fresh-food outlets
- Nutrition-education or cooking-class models improving healthy-eating habits

CHALLENGE AREA: YOUTH EDUCATION & SUSTAINABILITY

Orange County Public Schools serves more than 200,000 students — one of the largest school districts in the country. Significant gaps exist in STEM enrichment access outside formal school hours, particularly in lower-income communities served by Neighborhood and Community Centers. Sustainability education and green-career pathways are underrepresented in out-of-school programming despite growing demand for environmental and infrastructure skills across the regional economy.

200K+

Students served by Orange County Public Schools

1

RFP in this challenge area — focused on STEM at community centers

90 days

Pilot window to demonstrate measurable learning outcomes

RFP 25 Deliver Sustainability-Focused STEM Programming

Purpose of this pilot

Assess whether proposed pilots successfully deliver engaging sustainability-focused STEM programming for students at Neighborhood and Community Centers within 90 days.

Call for solutions

Rally invites pilot-ready proposals that address this challenge. Examples include:

- Hands-on STEM workshops focused on environmental science, energy, water, or climate resilience
- Project-based learning modules connecting sustainability concepts to real-world challenges
- Mobile or pop-up STEM labs hosted at community centers
- Sustainability and green-career exposure programs for youth

Ready to apply? Proposals are accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed as received.
Complete the prep guide before submitting.

Prep guide [here](#).

Submit your proposal [here](#).

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