

CASE STUDY:

COLUMBUS OFFERS AMAZING OPPORTUNITIES IN **FINANCIAL SERVICES & TECHNOLOGY**

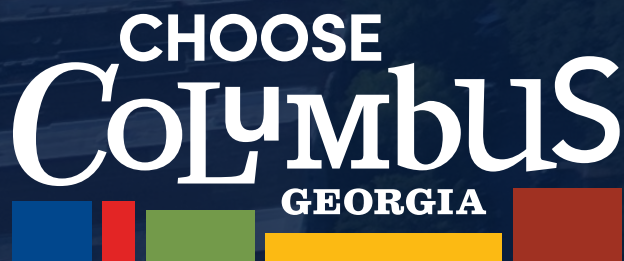


CHOOSE
Columbus
GEORGIA



We do amazing.

Home to Financial Giants Like TSYS, Aflac & Synovus



We do amazing.



Some of the largest Financial Services and Technology companies in the U.S. are located in Columbus.

“Columbus is known as a center for technology and a financial hub,” said Colin Martin, External Affairs Manager at AT&T West Georgia. AT&T’s three biggest customers, TSYS, Synovus, and Aflac, played a major role in helping the city evolve into the thriving business and financial center it is today. Each of these Fortune 500 companies started in Columbus. Their success has contributed significantly to the city’s economy, community, and reputation.

TSYS, now part of Global Payments, is a global leader in payment processing that began as a bankcard department within Columbus Bank and Trust (now Synovus). They became a publicly traded company in 1983 and provide payment solutions to clients around the world.

Synovus is a trusted and established banking and financial institution dating back to the mid-1800s, the company has a strong presence throughout the southeastern states and is the largest bank headquartered in Georgia.

Aflac, also founded in Columbus, offers outstanding insurance solutions, and their philanthropic efforts that include substantial contributions to pediatric cancer research and treatment.

Columbus has a growing number of related companies with a thriving Financial Services and Technology ecosystem. Between the location advantages, affordable lifestyle, reliable energy, and a skilled workforce, Columbus is the perfect place for businesses to thrive.



COLUMBUS, GEORGIA GIVES THE FINANCIAL SERVICES & TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE



With fierce competition in the Financial Services and Technology industry, Columbus offers companies the advantages they need to grow: ready-to-occupy buildings, top-tier talent, a low cost of doing business, abundant water supply to support data centers, a diverse energy supply, and low utility rates.

Strong & Diverse Infrastructure

Columbus Water Works provides an almost unlimited water supply. The river also feeds several nearby hydroelectric dams, which, according to Doug Jenkins, Regional VP of Georgia Power Company, are but one component of an ever-diversifying energy infrastructure. “East of the city, we have many solar facilities,” he explained. “We also have a large coal-fired energy plant, and soon, we’ll be bringing a large nuclear power plant to the Augusta area.” He added that the power distribution system is exceptionally reliable and efficient.

Thanks to the abundance of water and excellent management, Columbus Water Works offers the best rates in the Southeastern United States.

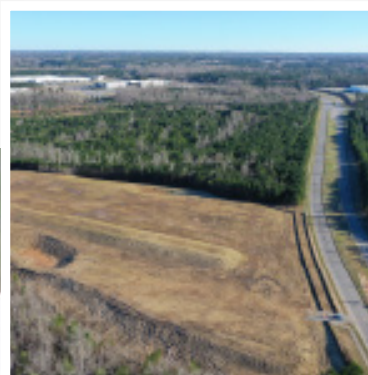
Georgia Power is the largest subsidiary of Southern Company, one of the nation’s largest generators of electricity. The company is an investor-owned, tax-paying utility serving 2.3 million customers in 155 of the 159 counties in Georgia. In addition to providing great service, Georgia Power’s rates remain well below the national average. According to Electricity Local, Columbus’s average Industrial electricity rate is 4.35% less than the Georgia average and 14.24% less than the national average rate.

The community enjoys secure, high-speed internet from a choice of providers. Additionally, The Columbus Consolidated Government continues to be proactive in leveraging federal and state grants to support digital inclusion initiatives, further strengthening the city’s position as a tech-savvy community.

Available Sites

This community also has plenty of available land, industrial parks, and zones.

One of the most ideal sites for expanding Financial Services and Technology companies is The Synovus Center located at 1111 Bay Avenue in Downtown Columbus. This 5-story, 120,000-square-foot, multi-tenant office building serves as the headquarters of the regional banking and financial services company, Synovus. It was built in 2003 and has views of the Chattahoochee River. The building is a Class A office condominium.



Columbus, Georgia is the Epicenter of the Financial Services and Technology Industry in the Southeast:

- 11,000+ people are employed in the Financial Services and Technology industry in Columbus, Georgia.
- TSYS (Total System Services) has 4,075 employees in Columbus.
- Aflac has 3,335 employees across nine physical locations in Columbus.
- Synovus has 1,370 employees in Columbus.

Location Advantages

Beyond water and power, Columbus offers location advantages for Financial Services and Technology. Georgia is the superhub of the southeast, and Columbus is the gateway to the southeastern states – just 107 miles from Atlanta, approximately 140 miles from Birmingham and 220 miles from Chattanooga.

Columbus Airport (CSG) and Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport make reaching 80% of the U.S. market within a 2-hour flight possible. CSG serves the Columbus, GA, and Fort Moore area and offers direct flights to Atlanta. Because it's a mid-sized airport with fewer passengers, TSA lines are short and move quickly, making flying from Columbus convenient and efficient. CSG accommodates over 100,000 passengers annually through Delta Airlines, as well as itinerant business aircrafts and occasional military flights.



Trained Workforce

The local leader in Financial Services and Technology education is the Turner College of Business and Technology at Columbus State University, which offers nine graduate programs, 12 undergraduate programs, and numerous certifications. AACSB International, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, accredits these business programs. The school is home to the College's computer science programs, the TSYS School of Computer Science, which is recognized by the U.S. National Security Agency as a Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education. Columbus Technical College offers degrees, certifications, and continuing education related to cyber security, business, and finance.



250,000+ WORKERS

IN BI-CITY LABOR SHED

6,300+ BUSINESSES

IN GREATER COLUMBUS

APPROXIMATELY 2,500

ACTIVE DUTY SOLDIERS EXIT THE MILITARY
FROM FORT MOORE EACH YEAR

APPROXIMATELY 700

STAY IN COLUMBUS

OVER 43% INCREASE

IN # OF RESIDENTS WITH BACHELOR'S
DEGREE OR HIGHER SINCE 2000

COLUMBUS IS THE EPICENTER OF FINANCIAL SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE SOUTHEAST

Aflac

Founded in Columbus in 1955 as American Family Life Insurance Company of Columbus, Aflac, is now the largest provider of supplemental insurance in the U.S. Its business model is unique because its supplemental insurance products pay cash benefits directly to the policyholder to help protect against income and asset loss when a specific health event or life situation creates financial challenges. Today Aflac employs 3,335 people in Columbus.

“Aflac is proud to call Columbus the city of their Worldwide Headquarters,” said Audrey Tillman, Executive Vice President and General Counsel For Aflac Incorporated. “As a major employer in Columbus, Aflac recognizes the need to invest in not only their employees but their community.”

She went on to explain that one of the ways Aflac attracts, develops, and retains skilled and knowledgeable employees, is through its partnerships with universities and local communities by way of Internships, Information Technology Apprenticeship (ITA), Leadership & Analyst Program (LeAP) an Information Technology Co-Op, and CSU’s Servant Leadership Program.

“Columbus is a place where 90% of transplants love to live,” Tillman said. “The outdoor life and proximity to schools and commerce are a big draw.”





Synovus

Synovus is a full-service financial company headquartered in Columbus, with a five-state footprint in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama. With 1,370 employees and approximately \$61 billion in assets, this top-performing midcap bank is the largest bank headquartered in Georgia. Synovus has been named one of the Best Banks in America by Forbes and was recently named J.D. Power's top bank from a customer and trust standpoint. Its family of companies spans commercial and retail banking, mortgage, and investments.

"We're very confident in our ability to grow," said Heath Schondelmayer, Division CEO, adding that the company is building a new 190,000-square-foot headquarters in Columbus' uptown neighborhood. "We're more than a bank," he said. "We're looking for I.T., digital, and cyber security talent nationwide. We have a long history of working with Columbus State University. They started a Cyber Security track for their banking and financial industry students." Schondelmayer is proud to add that the average tenure of Synovus' employee base is over 18 years.



TSYS (Total System Services)

TSYS began in 1959 as a bankcard department within Columbus Bank and Trust (now Synovus) to develop a system for issuing credit cards and processing transactions for one of Georgia's first bank credit cards. This new and unique payment option revolutionized the global economy over the next half-century. By 1975, TSYS was electronically processing card payments for other banks. Later, TSYS developed a new processing technology that became the industry standard.

In 1983, TSYS became a separately managed and publicly traded company, and in 1999 built its global headquarters—the Riverfront Campus—in downtown Columbus. As a leading global payments provider, TSYS has played a key role in Georgia's rise as a technology hub. Today, this ever-evolving company is a robust, cloud-native global platform that can handle over 24 billion transactions annually. In 2019,

TSYS and Global Payments completed a merger agreement for \$21.5 billion. The combined company, Global Payments Inc., is publicly traded (NYSE: GPN), and has more than 24,000 employees worldwide.

TSYS is now North America's largest third-party payment processor for issuing banks, with a 40% market share. It is also one of the largest payment processors in Europe. In addition to helping banks and retailers worldwide process their credit and debit card transactions, the company makes it possible for thousands of merchants to accept and process payments and for millions of consumers to manage their money using prepaid cards. TSYS has 4,075 employees in Columbus, and it continues to be a driving force in making payment technologies faster, easier, and more secure.

Columbus State University's TSYS Center for Cyber Security graduates a steady supply of workers in this advancing field.

OmegaFi

Founded in 1992, OmegaFi provides secure, user-friendly software solutions to over 4,000 fraternity and sorority chapters and alumni associations across the U.S. This versatile, specialized software has 180,000 paid users. According to OmegaFi CEO Frank Magnione, Columbus offers a low cost of living and high quality of life, enabling the company to hire first-rate talent at a lower cost than other markets.

NetSystems, Inc.

Most companies and organizations find a robust, comprehensive I.T. solution provider essential in a digital-first world. NetSystems handles concerns surrounding the complexities of computer systems and data security so its customers can focus on their core business operations. “Because NetSystems supports medical, dental, and veterinary practices, Columbus is an ideal location,” said NetSystems President Roger Gibson. “Columbus is a great place to live and work.”

Today, the Financial Services and Technology industry employs approximately 11,000 people in Columbus. Given the amazing track record in this location, the growth of the overall industry, and the unique support for workforce development, that number is predicted to rise.



BUSINESSES THRIVE IN COLUMBUS

Beyond Financial Services and Technology companies, Columbus is home to major corporations, including Pratt & Whitney Aerospace, Piedmont Columbus Regional Healthcare, Kia Motors Manufacturing, Coca-Cola Bottling Company UNITED, and Hostess. It is also home to many mid-sized companies, small businesses, and innovative startups spanning various sectors.

“Georgia has been the top state to do business in for ten years in a row, and Columbus is pro-business,” said Heath Schondelmayer, Market President of Columbus Synovus. “Many businesses have started here and gone public to become Fortune 500 companies.”

As Georgia’s second-largest city, Columbus works with the state to ensure businesses have every advantage possible.

“The community really supports us and is pro-business,” said Heath Schondelmayer, Synovus Division CEO and Chair of the Columbus Economic Development Authority. “Many companies have started here and gone public to become Fortune 500. Georgia has been the top state to do business in for nine years straight. We’re the second largest city in the state, and we work with the state.”

“Columbus has one of the best public/private partnerships I have ever seen,” said Christopher Woodruff, The Cotton Companies Founder and CEO.

Knowing a diverse business ecosystem is best for the community, Columbus offers programs that substantially help prospective and newly-minted entrepreneurs. In addition to entrepreneurial education programs, business incubators, and mentoring, Columbus has several organizations designed to support and encourage startups in innovative ways. One of its most notable organizations is StartUp Columbus, which helps make office space and human, financial, and professional resources available. Thanks to its partnership with Co.StartersCo, future business owners can take an entrepreneurship course and compete in a business pitch competition, which provides \$40K in funding to all its winners.

“We have been going for five years and have supported hundreds of entrepreneurs,” said StartUp Columbus Executive Director Ben McMinn. “So far, 140 entrepreneurs have graduated through our program, and forty-four businesses have incubated out of here.”

HOME TO A DIVERSE, ENTHUSIASTIC, UNIQUELY SKILLED WORKFORCE

Two hundred fifty thousand people work in the greater Columbus region, many coming from 20 surrounding counties in both Georgia and Alabama. More than half are ages 25-44.

“So often when we recruit talent from all over the country, they can’t believe the quality of life assets in Columbus. They’re often happy to move here from Atlanta, Birmingham, or even New York or Washington DC because we have big city assets at a slower pace,” said Synovus Division CEO, Heath Schondelmayer.

Columbus’s proximity to [Fort Moore](#) gives it a decided workforce advantage. Approximately 2,500 soldiers exit the military from [Fort Moore](#) each year, and approximately 700 of them stay in Columbus.

“Their presence is an enormous asset to employers,” said retired Brigadier General Andrew Hilmes. “Soldiers are vetted, they have security clearances, they’re trustworthy and reliable, and they are inculcated in military values from day one. Employers who hire them are getting trained, mature soldiers, with some interesting experiences under their belts.”

He went on to explain that [Fort Moore offers The Career Skills Program](#), which allows transitioning service members to participate in Employment Skills Training (EST), on-the-job training (OJT), Pre-Apprenticeships, and

Internships. According to Hilmes, most soldiers who leave the military through Fort Moore take advantage of that program.

Adding to and supporting the locally skilled workforce are [Columbus State University](#) and [Columbus Technical College](#), [Mercer Medical School](#), [Morehouse Medical School](#), [Georgia Military College](#), [Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University](#), and [Strayer University](#), which also have Columbus Campuses. Meanwhile, [Auburn University](#), [Georgia Institute of Technology](#), and [Georgia State University](#) are just a short drive away.

“We offer employers a warranty. If an employer hires a graduate and they don’t have the skill they’re supposed to have within two years, we retrain them at no cost to the company or the student,” said Martha Ann Todd, President of Columbus Technical College. She added that in addition to employer warranties, her school is always open to developing new programs in response to employer needs.

LIFESTYLE: COLUMBUS OFFERS AN AMAZING LIFESTYLE

Rising from the east bank of the Chattahoochee River, this unique city of just over 202,000 people offers a unique mixture of big-city amenities and hometown Southern charm.

Fondly described as “under the radar and over the top,” Columbus is full of surprises. Home to the world’s most extensive urban whitewater rafting course and bordered by a 15-mile scenic river walk, it’s an extraordinary place where nature’s beauty weaves itself into the urban tapestry in unexpected ways. There are blocks of postcard-perfect 19th-century architecture, massive oak trees, public fountains, and eclectic art installations. The pleasantly walkable downtown and adjacent neighborhoods boast delightful stores, restaurants, pubs, and coffee shops – many of which offer pet-friendly outdoor seating and fast, free Wi-Fi. The friendliness is palpable, and so is the professional energy. Two hundred fifty thousand people work in the greater Columbus region, many coming from 20 surrounding counties in both Georgia and Alabama. More than half of them are ages 25-44.

Though the cost of living is about 12% below the national average, Columbus offers cultural, lifestyle, and recreational amenities on par with larger cities.

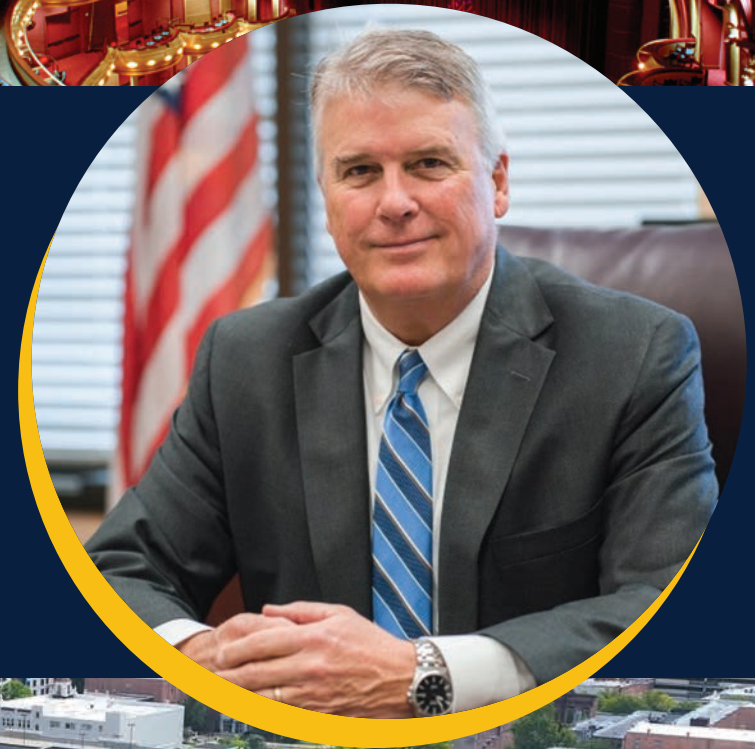
In addition to the whitewater rapids course, river walk, and idyllic downtown, the city has an extensive urban trail system, nine historic districts, and three farmers’ markets. It’s also home to the [National Civil War Naval Museum](#), [The National Infantry Museum](#) and [American Soldier Center](#), and [The Coca-Cola Space Science Center](#), which features an immersive theater and an observatory. [The Columbus Museum](#) offers American artwork and regional history exhibits. Concert and Theatergoers can see their favorite entertainment in the opulent [RiverCenter for the Performing Arts](#) or the [Columbus Civic Center](#), which also hosts basketball, cheerleading, hockey, figure skating, and Esports events. Another acclaimed sports facility is [Historic Golden Park](#), Official Home to [Columbus Chatt-A-Hoots](#), Sunbelt Baseball League. The city also boasts the nationally renowned [South Commons Complex](#), Home to the 1996 Olympic Women’s Fastpitch Softball Competition and the 2019 USA Softball International Cup. [Bull Creek Golf Course](#), [Cooper Creek Tennis Center](#), and [Columbus Aquatic Center](#) add to the city’s recreational offerings.



“This town has great things to offer in every interest area, arts, music, outdoor adventure, it’s all here, and it’s all easy to get to. You’re never more than 10-15 minutes from anything and everything,” said President and Chief Officer, Pace Halter of WC Bradley Real Estate.



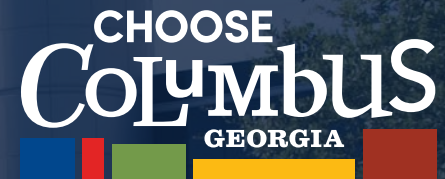
“We’re uniquely positioned,” said Columbus Mayor Skip Henderson. “We get people coming in all the time who have either not been to Columbus in a long time, or who have never been to Columbus, and they usually start the conversation with ‘I had no idea.’”



Be Part Of Something Amazing

As people become more reliant on digital technology, Columbus continues to move from strong to stronger in the Financial Services and Technology sectors. This great community nurtures the expansion of established Financial Services and Technology companies as well as the development of earlier-stage industry players.

The Greater Columbus Georgia Chamber of Commerce Economic Development is dedicated to offering support and resources for businesses looking to Choose Columbus. We can put together a relocation package for your company. Contact us today for information and assistance.



We do amazing.

**Greater Columbus Georgia Chamber
of Commerce Economic Development**

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