

**2004-05 INNOVATIVE GRANT APPLICATION FORM**

**Project Information**

- 1) **Applicant Name:** Sarasota County
- 2) **Primary contact person:** Gary Bennett, Solid Waste General Manager
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Environmental Services  
Solid Waste  
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- 6) **Project Title:** A Green Business Certification Program
- 7) **Grant Request Amount:** \$150,000
- 8) **Length of project (months):** 24 months

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorizing Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Solid Waste General Manager  
Title

## **PROJECT ABSTRACT**

Since 1991, commercial recycling has been mandatory in Sarasota County per local ordinance. Although this mandatory requirement has been a valuable tool, it can be difficult and contentious to enforce. The County is looking for a better way to *encourage* businesses to recycle – to develop a “carrot” approach that will complement the regulatory “stick.” Sarasota County proposes to implement a program new to Florida – the Green Business Partnership – that will certify businesses with progressive solid waste management practices. The County will invite other County environmental departments to participate in the program to develop a multi-media certification; however, grant funds will be focused on the solid waste aspects of the program.

Sarasota County wants to continue its history of being one of the most progressive counties in the state of Florida by setting the pace in innovative waste management practices. While Green Lodging and Green Building programs are under development in Florida, no city or county has yet developed a “green” certification program available to all business types. Sarasota County believes that a certification program that promotes Green Business Partners will encourage participation because of the potential marketing advantage provided by the designation. The County will announce and promote certified partners and provide a Web page where consumers can locate Green Businesses.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Sarasota County proposes to develop and implement a **Green Business Partnership** program that will educate, advise, evaluate and certify businesses that use a best-management practices approach to waste management. Through the promotion of this program, businesses that are certified will achieve recognition as a Green Business Partner and benefit from their efforts to reduce and recycle solid waste.

The County Solid Waste Business Unit will form an advisory committee (the Green Team) to develop the scope and requirements of the certification. Representatives from other County programs – including Pollution Prevention, Hazardous Waste, Office of Sustainability, and the water and air programs – will be invited to participate, as will staff from municipal solid waste departments (Sarasota, Venice, North Port and Longboat Key), local area business development boards, chambers of commerce, and prominent local businesses. This partnership between the County and its cities and businesses will be mutually beneficial and result in better environmental awareness and practices throughout the County.

As the Green Team develops the program, the focus from the outset will be on source reduction, reuse, recycling and proper disposal of solid waste; however, a broader multi-media program will be developed based on the input from Team members. The County plans to include additional components, such as P2, proper management of hazardous waste, and water and energy conservation, as part of the certification requirements. The County currently sponsors a WaterWise program, and the feasibility of working in conjunction with this program will be explored. In addition, the Team will develop a mechanism to credit those businesses that achieve the State's Green Lodging and/or Clean Marinas certification.

While the program criteria and certification process are being developed, the Green Team will also be soliciting inaugural participants for the program. The initial targeted businesses will need to be in compliance with specified environmental regulations and should be high profile enough to elicit strong program awareness and positive public perception of the Green Business Partnership.

A Business Outreach Plan and Green Business Promotional Campaign will also be developed. The Outreach Plan will include methods and materials to announce the program, advertise the benefits of certification, and encourage business participation. The program will be marketed to business as a way to increase community goodwill, to ensure compliance with County requirements, and to improve their corporate image.

Certified Green Business Partners will be allowed to display a Green Business seal at their business and on company literature and letterhead. As part of the Promotional Campaign, they will also receive public recognition through press releases, newsletters and other media outlets, and will be listed on a Green Business Web page where consumers can identify Green Businesses and will be encouraged to support their efforts.

As the program progresses, the Green Team will track the response of businesses to the certification program for analysis and possible revisions. The Team will also track the waste reduction information reported by Green Business Partners to ascertain the effectiveness of the program.

## **Criteria 1: TECHNOLOGIES**

### **Sub-criteria 1 – Not in common use in Florida**

After communicating with solid waste professionals in Florida and conducting literature and Internet searches, we have found no county or municipality in the State that offers a certification to businesses that operate in a best-management practices approach to waste management.

In Polk County, a group of businesses has formed a private, nonprofit coalition, called the Green Partners, to promote environmentally sound practices. This program is not sponsored by local government. Because attempts to contact them have not been answered, we believe this group is not well established and does not have the type of proactive program that we envision.

### **Sub-criteria 2 – Novel application of an existing technology or process**

Several “green” business programs have been developed in other parts of the country, such as the San Francisco Bay Area Green Business Program, which is a comprehensive multi-media program; the EnviroStars program in King County, Washington, which focuses on reducing hazardous waste; the EPA WasteWise program, which focuses on municipal solid waste; and the Portland, Oregon, Certified Eco-Logical Business Program, which is a multi-media program for auto shops. The lessons learned from these programs will be incorporated into our Green Business Partnership program to create a certification program that optimizes the County’s resources and encourages business participation.

Several highly regarded “green” programs exist in Florida that focus on other applications (e.g., Green Lodging Program and Green Building Program). Businesses that already participate in these programs will be given favorable consideration during Sarasota County’s certification process. However, Sarasota County will bring the first government-sponsored Green Business certification program to Florida that invites all business types to participate.

### **Sub-criteria 3 – Overcoming obstacles to recycling/waste reduction in new or innovative ways**

Despite the County’s mandatory commercial recycling requirement, commercial recycling is not at the level that the County would like to see. The primary obstacle addressed by this project is how to provide sufficient *incentive* for businesses to implement waste reduction programs. The Green Business Partnership program will proactively motivate businesses to reduce and recycle waste by helping to advertise their successes and encouraging consumers to support Green Business Partners. Through the Green Business Promotional Campaign, a business that has sound environmental policies and has become certified will have a marketing advantage. This advantage is tangible recompense for the time, effort and cost of certification.

Because this is a continuing certification rather than a one-time recognition, the Green Team will explore giving preference to Green Business Partners during County procurements. Additional incentive will be provided by enlisting the support of local chambers of commerce, economic development boards and other business organizations to promote the program. The County will also work with its franchise haulers and processing contractor to help them understand the business opportunity provided by this program and to support the program.

## **Criteria 2: TARGETS**

The target of this program is the Commercial/Institutional Sector, including more than 18,000 businesses in unincorporated Sarasota County and an additional 10,000 businesses in the cities.

Commercial/institutional waste constitutes about 50% of the total waste disposed in Sarasota County. Primary materials that will be targeted by the Green Business Partnership include those that are mandated by County ordinance: corrugated cardboard, high-grade and mixed paper, newspaper, aluminum cans and foil, glass containers, #1 and #2 plastic bottles, polycoated paper cartons, and steel and tin cans. These targeted materials constitute 27% of commercial waste disposed in Sarasota County, as summarized below:<sup>1</sup>

Corrugated paper	8.2%
Office & mixed paper	9.4%
Newspaper	4.1%
Aluminum cans	0.6%
Glass containers	2.5%
#1 & #2 plastic bottles	1.3%
Polycoated paper cartons	0.2%
Steel & tin cans	0.8%
Total – Mandatory Materials	27.1%

The program will also focus on other materials types that make up a significant portion of the commercial waste stream, including other types of plastic (12%), construction and demolition debris (8.5%), textiles (7.5%) and scrap metal (4.2%). These materials make up another 32.2% of the commercial waste stream currently disposed.

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<sup>1</sup> R.W. Beck, Composition of Municipal Solid Waste Disposed in Sarasota County, Fl., June 2001, Exhibit 1, pg. 6.

## **Criteria 3: BENEFITS**

### **Sub-criteria 1 - Environmental Benefits**

- **Methodology** – The Green Business Partnership will be a certification program that requires businesses to demonstrate environmentally sound waste management at various levels:

**Source Reduction:** Businesses will need to demonstrate that waste prevention activities are being implemented. A wide range of activities will be included, such as two-sided printing and copying, reusing scrap paper, providing employees with reusable coffee mugs, altering manufacturing processes to decrease waste generation, or purchasing products in bulk, to name just a few.

**Recycling/Composting:** Businesses will also need to have a recycling program in place. The types of waste generated by a particular business will determine the materials recovery program most appropriate for that company. It's anticipated that recyclable fiber, which constitutes 22% of the commercial waste stream disposed, will be a primary program target.

**Environmentally Preferable Procurement (EPP):** Businesses will need to demonstrate that they include consideration of environmental factors in their procurement process.

**Proper Waste Disposal:** Businesses will need to properly dispose of all remaining wastes. The Team will verify that the company has no current violations or enforcement actions for improper disposal of solid waste.

- **Toxicity** – The EPP and source reduction criteria mentioned above will include utilization of “green” cleaning, lawn-care and other products that have lower toxicity, as well as changes in manufacturing processes or business operations that reduce the toxicity of wastes generated. The County’s pollution prevention staff will have an important role in identifying P2 criteria for inclusion in the program.

### **Sub-criteria 2 – Economic Benefits**

The EPP component of the Green Business Partnership criteria will help increase market demand for recycled-content and other “green” products.

Participating businesses should derive economic benefits from the program in several ways. Implementing an effective waste reduction program should help them reduce waste collection and disposal costs by implementing source reduction techniques and “right-sizing” their collection service to minimize service costs. In addition, the program will strive to give Green Business Partners a marketing advantage. They will be allowed to display the Green Business seal on their advertising, literature and letterhead. The County will promote them on a Web page where consumers will be able to locate businesses that are certified.

### **Sub-criteria 3 – Cost Effectiveness**

The efficiency and cost effectiveness of the Green Business Partnership will be monitored based on the number of certified partners and reporting that will be required of program partners. Reporting requirements will be developed by the Green Team, and will include information necessary to evaluate program effectiveness, but will not be so burdensome as to deter from program participation. Program sustainability will be accomplished by inviting private sector participation on the Green Team and encouraging economic development boards, chambers of commerce and other business entities to embrace and promote the program.

## **Criteria 4: TRANSFERABILITY**

### **Sub-criteria 1 – Transferability of technology and processes**

*Within Sarasota County:* Once certification criteria are established, the Green Business Partnership program is clearly transferable to businesses throughout the County and cities within the County. Because the Green Business designation will be promoted as an economic and marketing advantage, the County will initially target businesses with primarily local clientele. County staff will provide information and technical assistance to businesses to help them understand the benefits of a waste reduction program and how to establish a cost-effective and sustainable program that meets the Green Business Partnership certification criteria. Staff from city solid waste departments will be invited to participate on the Green Team to ensure that businesses countywide will have an opportunity to become a Green Business Partner.

*Within Florida:* The program is also transferable to other Florida communities. As cities and counties are looking for ways to increase recycling, many are looking at commercial/institutional enterprises as a relatively untapped source of recyclable materials. This program is intended to address the primary challenge facing all communities seeking to establish an effective commercial program – how to attract business interest and motivate them to participate to bring about measurable results.

### **Sub-criteria 2 – How project will promote transferability**

*Within Sarasota County:* This grant is being requested to assist with program startup and to incubate the program until it is embraced by the business community. The Business Outreach Plan and Green Business Promotional Campaign are crucial elements of the project that will transfer the program throughout the business community in Sarasota County and its cities. The Outreach Plan will include press releases, newspaper articles, direct mailings, technical assistance, presentations at business meetings, and media advertising. The Promotional Campaign will include media coverage and a Web page listing certified Green Business Partners, both encouraging consumers to support Green Business Partners.

Another critical project element will be participation of the business community (local chambers of commerce, economic development boards, and business leaders/organizations) during development of the certification program, the Outreach Plan and the Promotional Campaign. Their participation during program start-up will provide them with a stake in the program's long-term success. The objective is for the business community itself to spark program participation.

*Within Florida:* The County will provide information about the Green Business Partnership on a Web page, including certification criteria, names of Green Team members and a list of certified Green Business Partners. Sarasota County will announce the availability of this information via press releases, trade journal articles and e-mail notifications to other county recycling coordinators and solid waste managers. In addition to traditional information outlets, such as Recycle Florida Today and SWANA, the County will also promote the program through business organizations and forums.

## **Criteria 5: LOCAL SUPPORT**

As calculated below and outlined in the project budget provided on the following page, the percentage match is 32%.

Total Project Budget	\$219,000	
Grant Request	\$150,000	
Local Match	\$ 69,000	32% of total project budget

Applicant: Sarasota County					Project Title: Green Business Certification Program						
<b>Budget</b>											
(1) <b>Tasks</b>	Categories								Local Match		(12) Total Grant Request
	(2) Personnel	(3) Travel	(4) Equipment	(5) Supplies <sup>1</sup>	(6) Contractual	(7) Construction	(8) Other <sup>2</sup>	(9)* Total Budget	(10) In-Kind Match	(11) Cash Match	
Develop program framework using existing successful "green" programs	\$3,000.00				\$5,000.00			\$8,000.00	\$3,000.00		\$5,000.00
Form Advisory Group (Green Team)	\$3,000.00				\$5,000.00		\$2,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00
Develop Green Business Partnership Program and certification criteria	\$10,000.00			\$1,000.00	\$15,000.00		\$3,000.00	\$29,000.00	\$9,000.00		\$20,000.00
Develop Business Outreach Plan & Green Business Promotional Campaign	\$6,000.00			\$5,000.00	\$15,000.00		\$3,000.00	\$29,000.00	\$9,000.00		\$20,000.00
Initiate Business Outreach Plan & Green Business Promotional Campaign	\$13,000.00			\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00		\$14,000.00	\$47,000.00	\$12,000.00		\$35,000.00
Initiate certification of Green Businesses	\$10,000.00			\$5,000.00	\$10,000.00		\$10,000.00	\$35,000.00	\$10,000.00		\$25,000.00
Track program development and business response to program	\$6,000.00				\$5,000.00			\$11,000.00	\$3,000.00		\$8,000.00
Track Green Business reporting information	\$3,000.00				\$5,000.00			\$8,000.00	\$3,000.00		\$5,000.00
Program Management & Administration	\$10,000.00			\$2,000.00	\$10,000.00			\$22,000.00	\$10,000.00		\$12,000.00
Progress & Final Reports	\$8,000.00			\$2,000.00	\$10,000.00			\$20,000.00	\$5,000.00		\$15,000.00
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$72,000.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$25,000.00</b>	<b>\$90,000.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$32,000.00</b>	<b>\$219,000.00</b>	<b>\$69,000.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$150,000.00</b>

\* NOTE: Column 9 is the total of columns 2 through 8. It also should equal the total of columns 10-12

Percentage Match 31.51%

<sup>1</sup> Includes preparation of printed materials and other supplies.

<sup>2</sup> Includes value of private sector involvement based on \$100/hour of time invested.