

Florida Economic Gardening Statewide Initiative

Eligibility Requirements for Participating Companies

To be eligible for assistance under this program, a business must be a for-profit, privately held, investment-grade business that:

- Employs at least 10 persons but not more than 50 persons;
- Maintained its principal place of business in Florida for at least the previous 2 years;
- Generates at least \$1 million but not more than \$25 million in annual revenue
- Qualifies for the tax refund program for qualified target industry businesses under s. 288.106; This includes the following industries as identified by NAICS code prefix:
 - NAICS 31-33 – Manufacturing
 - NAICS 52 – Finance and Insurance Services
 - NAICS 42 – Wholesale Trade
 - NAICS 51 – Information Industries
 - NAICS 54 – Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
 - NAICS 55 – Management Services
 - NAICS 56 – Administrative and Support Services
- During 3 of the previous 5 years, has increased both its number of full-time equivalent employees in this state and its gross revenues;
- Be able to enter into an agreement with the Florida Economic Gardening Institute at the University of Central Florida to establish the business's commitment to participate in the GrowFL program;
- Over the course of a year (From July 2012 through June 2013) participate in Technical Assistance and CEO Roundtables requiring regular meeting attendance and participation (up to 6 to 8 hours per month); and
- Provide financial data and report job creation data as prescribed in both the online application and post-performance evaluation.

Technical Assistance Description

Technical Assistance matches businesses with the GrowFL team of specialists that help to analyze a company's overall business strategy to positively affect sales and marketing efforts. Technical assistance uses high end corporate level tools and cutting edge scientific concepts to help entrepreneurial growth companies (known as 2nd Stage companies) identify markets, monitor competitors, track industry trends, locate customer clusters on maps, and use search engine optimization/social media for marketing and various customized research. The goal is to help improve a business' marketing and sales efforts to increase revenues resulting in business growth and sustainable job creation.

Technical Assistance tools support database searching, geographic information systems, search engine optimization, web marketing, social media strategy, and network mapping. It focuses on front end, strategic issues of business including core strategy, market dynamics, marketing, teams, and finance that draw on scientific theories based on complexity science, network theory, temperament of individuals, and systems thinking.

A typical Technical Assistance project is initiated with a 1 to 2 hour kickoff call with the CEO/President of the company. The CEO/President is interviewed about the business and their current business issues. During the call the FEGI team will probe into the issues and establish a task list of activities that it will be performed for the client. Tasks are worked over a multi-week period involving the team's research effort and subsequent telephone and email communications with the CEO/President to review and confirm the client's understanding of the information provided. It is anticipated that a CEO will have multiple encounters with the GrowFL Technical Assistance team throughout the course of the year.

Services may include:

- Core business strategy review
- Market research
- Competitive intelligence gathering
- Internet strategy
- Social media strategy
- Website analysis and search engine optimization
- Referrals - inclusive but not limited to accounting, trademark and licensing, process design, information technology, business valuation, lean manufacturing, and international trade.

CEO Roundtable Description

CEO Roundtables give participants the opportunity to discuss business practices and management strategies with peer CEOs who deal with similar growth challenges. CEO roundtables bring groups of entrepreneurs together 10 times over a one-year period for collaborative problem-solving sessions that address issues important to business owners. Led by a trained facilitator, these ongoing discussion groups are structured to provide CEOs with timely advice to problems they are currently experiencing. Participants discuss ways to overcome their company's obstacles in areas such as finance, employee relations, legal compliance and marketing. Unlike a traditional networking group, the CEOs in the roundtable don't sell to each other; but instead provide each other with insight and new perspective on management techniques. The confidential nature of the roundtable allows peer executives to openly share their company's struggles so that other participants can learn from both their achievements and their mistakes. In addition to serving as peer mentors, CEOs in the roundtable group become referral sources to potential business partner relationships and other ventures, and often say they learn about their own business from hearing about each other's challenges.

CEO Forum Description

CEO Forums take place twice a year and allow experienced CEOs to share "lessons learned" with second-stage growth entrepreneurs. The forums are intended for CEOs to learn from entrepreneurs who have grown successful businesses, network with other entrepreneurs and build a stronger entrepreneurial culture in the community or region.