
AWARDED ECONOMIC GARDENING GRANT

PORT ST LUCIE, FL—Florida’s Research Coast Economic Development Coalition was awarded an Economic Gardening Grant of \$193,000 by Workforce Florida, Inc. The grant was submitted by Workforce Solutions, a Coalition partner.

“This grant will allow the Coalition to target companies with high-growth potential,” the Chief Executive Officer of Workforce Solutions Gwenda Thompson said.

These companies with a high-growth potential are referred to as ‘gazelles’ and have 10-99 employees that are at a point in their business cycle when the casual ad hoc methods of entrepreneurial ventures begin to fail.

Using grant funds, the Coalition will develop various programs that help gazelles succeed. Grant activities include the research and development of market intelligence in targeted industry sectors, marketing of training programs, workshops, the identification of supply chains and exporting opportunities, creation of a regional business information website and training of 150 workers in targeted industries. The project’s targeted industries are healthcare, biotechnology and energy including alternative energies, but many other businesses will benefit from the grant activities.

Primary Coalition partners with Workforce Solutions in this project include the Business Development Board of Martin County, the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County, the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce, and Okeechobee Main Street. Other business and educational entities will be recruited as project partners. These entities include Indian River State College, Florida Atlantic University and the Chambers of Commerce in Indian River, Martin and St Lucie County.

Workforce Solutions is a private, non-profit, Florida corporation with a Board of Directors consisting of private business, economic development and education representatives, community and state agencies, and elected officials. Members of the Board represent the diversity of businesses, organizations and trades that operate in the Treasure Coast Region, including Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, and St. Lucie County. We are chartered by the State of Florida to create and manage a workforce development service delivery system responsive to the needs of businesses and jobseekers. We offer award-winning programs and partnerships recognized locally, statewide, and nationally. Our staff members are certified workforce professionals often recognized by their peers as leaders in workforce development.

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