



Economic Gardening Program Certification Standards for Florida

Purposes

The National Center for Economic Gardening program certification has three purposes

- *To encourage the Economic Gardening movement-- an entrepreneurial approach to economic development. (Level I)*
- *To encourage communities to begin using EG tools and concepts and to experiment with new tools and concepts (Level II)*
- *To ensure high fidelity programs that use the concepts, tools and practices proven to produce jobs and wealth. (Level III)*

Definitions

Level I programs (support of the entrepreneurial movement) have a general interest in the local entrepreneurial movement and have publicly stated support for the "growth from within" rationale for economic development. These programs support entrepreneurship activity primarily at the start up and early stage levels. They share values and objectives with programs like Main Street, sustainability, and local foods. Level I programs support the movement and philosophy of Economic Gardening but do not practice the core techniques or pursue the targeted objectives of a full fidelity level III program. To be considered for level I certification programs must have a local representative certified as an Economic Gardening Program Director by the National Center for Economic Gardening (NCEG)

Level II programs (experimentation) are active in local entrepreneurship support but tend to focus on start-ups, stage I companies, and local market retail and service businesses rather than stage II growth companies. They may provide other types of entrepreneurial support services and experiment with new tools and concepts. They may include SBDC, chamber of commerce programs, existing business assistance programs but show progress in using Economic Gardening tools, principles and practices targeting growth oriented companies. To be considered for level II certification programs must have a certified program director as described in Level I, and at least one local

representative with Professional Certification from NCEG as either a Team Leader or as an EG Specialist.

Level III programs (full fidelity) require full fidelity to the Economic Gardening concept including use of all tools, concepts and practices. The focus is on the strategic issues of stage II growth companies (urban track) or the strategic issues of high potential growth companies that export innovations (rural track). To be considered for Level III Certification programs must have a certified Program Director and at least 3 local representatives with professional certification as team leaders, or EG specialists and a clearly defined relationship with the Florida Economic Gardening Institute (FEGI) for access to EG hub services.

Certification Criteria

Level I Certification Criteria (Support of the Movement)

Level I programs can be certified via submitted materials and an onsite visit from a representative of FEGI. Applicants must provide the following:

Evidence of **Entrepreneurship Support:** Documentation of formal discussions/statements of support for economic gardening philosophy (economic development by supporting local entrepreneurs) by political leaders.

Description of **Local Efforts:** Identification of local economic development agencies and the role they play in entrepreneurial development.

Staff Qualifications: Local program director with professional certification from NCEG

On-Site Visit: Host an onsite visit for a representative from FEGI with the leadership of the applying organization.

Fee: \$700 Application fee for a two-year certification.

Level II Certification Criteria (Partial Fidelity and Experimentation)

Level II programs can be certified via submitted materials and a Memorandum of Understanding with FEGI to outline the roles and responsibilities for working with the State EG Hub System at FEGI. Applicants must provide the following:

Evidence of Entrepreneurship Support: Documentation of formal discussions/statements of support for economic gardening philosophy (economic development by supporting local entrepreneurs) by political leaders.

Description of Services: Show provision of one or more entrepreneurial services available through FEGI.

Staff Qualifications: The Program Director and at least one representative must have professional certification from NCEG.

Use of Economic Gardening Tools and Concepts: Show proficiency in at least one Economic Gardening tool and one Economic Gardening concept: Database searching, GIS, SEO, social media, temperament, complexity science, network theory, systems thinking, or innovation on a fitness landscape. This can be accomplished through internal resources or via outsourcing through the FEGI EG Hub system.

Innovation: Demonstrate at least one innovation in tools/concepts that support local entrepreneurial activity.

Fee: \$700 application fee for a two-year certification.

Level III Certification Criteria (Full Fidelity)

Level III programs require submitted documentation and an onsite visit from the Florida Economic Gardening Institute. Applicants must provide the following:

Evidence of Formal Political Support: Formal statement of support for Economic Gardening

Adequate Budget: Budget must show \$3,700 per company assisted. Overhead and In-kind donations can be included.

Staff Qualifications - a certified Program Director and at least 3 local representatives with professional certification as team leaders, or EG specialists

Growth Company Focus: Show focus on emerging Stage 1 and Stage II entrepreneurial growth companies or companies that export innovation.

Strategic Issues: Show focus on strategic issues (core strategy, market dynamics, business models, qualified sales prospects, team building).

Use of Economic Gardening tools: Show use and proficiency in the following tools: Database searching, GIS, SEO, web marketing and social media.

Use of Economic Gardening concepts: Show use and proficiency in the following concepts: complexity science, network theory, temperament, and systems thinking.

Technology Infrastructure: Show adequate technology required to support this model including a conference call system, software for application, collaboration work site, task tracking, budget tracking, accounting and report generation on activity and outcomes.

Partners: Show strong relationships with local economic development agencies that can refer Stage II companies, with labor force development organizations (including CEO

pools if possible), finance institutions (including venture capital), and entrepreneurial support professions (accountants, attorneys, web developers, consultants, etc.).

Local Engagement with Stage II Companies: Show local engagement with Stage II companies including forums, summits and CEO roundtables. Rural Track programs must show engagement with growth potential companies that export innovation.

Public Relations and Program Marketing: Show a public relations and marketing plan for promoting the local program to second stage companies, government officials, economic development organizations and chambers of commerce.

Entrepreneurial Staffing and Skill Set: Applicant must show some combination of staff which exhibits the following skills: knowledge of aspects of business including strategy, management and marketing, training in business interview techniques, report writing capabilities including research, analysis, and conclusions. Staff must have the following skills: database searching, geographic information systems, search engine optimization and web marketing, social media.

Training Required: All staff members including a Program Administrator must have professional certification in Economic Gardening. Staff must be enrolled in ongoing coaching network. All staff members must complete 8 hours per year of continuing education in Economic Gardening.

Entrepreneurial Organization: Applicant must show organizational innovation, speed, customer service, quality and continual improvement.

Minimum Engagements: Applicants must show records of completing a minimum of 50 engagements with local companies. Rural Track programs must show a minimum of 25 company engagements.

Measureable Results: Show job creation and economic impact attributable to the Economic Gardening program.

Fee: \$5,000 application fee. Certification good for three years.

Provisional Level III Certification Criteria

Applicants will be granted Provisional Level III Certification by completing all requirements for Level III Certification except the minimum number of engagements.

Application Form

Level I - EG Program Certification

Jurisdiction or Organization _____

Contact Person _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

E-mail address _____

Applicant should submit the following documentation:

- Documentation (minutes or signed statement) showing formal discussions and statements of support for the Economic Gardening philosophy (economic growth by supporting local entrepreneurs) by political or organization leaders
- Identification of local economic development agencies and the role they play in entrepreneurial development
- Verification of on-site visit from the Florida Economic Gardening Institute
- Program Directors certification from NCEG
- \$700 application fee

This application form and associated documents should be sent to:

*National Center for Economic Gardening
c/o Edward Lowe Foundation
P. O. Box 8
Cassopolis, Michigan 49031-0008*

Application Form

Level II - EG Program Certification

Jurisdiction or Organization_____

Contact Person_____

Address_____

Phone Number_____

E-mail address_____

Applicant should submit the following documentation:

- Documentation (minutes or signed statement) showing formal discussions and statements of support for the Economic Gardening philosophy (economic growth by supporting local entrepreneurs) by political or organization leaders
- Description of one or more entrepreneurial support services provided by the organization
- Documentation of Memorandum of Understanding with the Florida Economic Gardening Institute
- Name of certified Program Director and at least one professionally certified staff member and date of professional training.
- Show proficiency in at least one Economic Gardening tool (database searching, GIS, SEO, social media) and one Economic Gardening concept (temperament, complexity science, network theory, systems thinking, innovation on a fitness landscape). This may be called out in a report provided to business or a summary statement of comments made to a business.

\$700 application fee

This application form and associated documents should be sent to:

*National Center for Economic Gardening
c/o Edward Lowe Foundation
P. O. Box 8
Cassopolis, Michigan 49031-0008*

Application Form

Level III - EG Program Certification

Jurisdiction or Organization _____

Contact Person _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

E-mail address _____

Applicant should submit the following documentation:

- A formal statement of support for Economic Gardening from the applicant political jurisdiction or organization
- The annual budget showing a minimum of \$3,700 per company assisted. This budget amount will include cost of salary, tools, overhead and all associated direct and indirect (including in-kind and partner donation) costs.
- A list of companies served showing focus on Stage II entrepreneurial growth companies (urban track) or companies that export innovation (rural track). Documentation should include name and address of company, employment of 10 or greater, sales of \$1-100 million.
- A company report showing a focus on strategic issues (core strategy, market dynamics, business model, qualified sales prospects, team building)
- A company report showing use of the following Economic Gardening tools: database searching, GIS, SEO, web marketing and social media.
- Show reports and analysis that use at least two of the following Economic Gardening concepts: complexity science, network theory, temperament, systems thinking, and innovation on a fitness landscape.
- Organizational chart, preferably a hub and spoke model with resource team centralized and outlying partners serving as the local business contact.
- Document the following technology infrastructure: conference call system, application software, collaboration site, task tracking, budget tracking, accounting systems, and reporting on activity and outcomes.

- Show relationships with local economic development agencies that refer Stage II companies; labor force development organizations (including CEO pools if possible); finance institutions (including venture capital if possible); and entrepreneurial support professions (accountants, attorneys, web developers, consultants, etc.)
- Public relations and marketing plan for promoting the local program to second stage companies, government officials, economic development organizations and chambers of commerce.
- Document local engagement with Stage II companies including forums, summits and CEO roundtables.
- List Program Director and at least three team members that have Economic Gardening Professional Certification and date they took the professional training class.
- Show the following skill sets through recorded interview and/or written company report: interview skills; report writing including knowledge of business aspects, research, analysis and conclusions; database searching; Geographic information systems; search engine optimization; web marketing; social media.
- Show enrollment in coaching network and 8 hours of continuing education in Economic Gardening.
- Show completion of 8 hours per year of continuing education in Economic Gardening.
- Demonstrate examples of innovation, speed, customer service, quality, continual Improvement in the organization.
- Show records of 50 company engagements. Rural Track programs must show records of 25 company engagements.
- Show job creation and economic impacts directly attributable to the Economic Gardening program.

Onsite Visit: A two day visit by the Florida Economic Gardening Institute will focus on the following elements: discussions with political leaders, discussions with staff, discussions with local companies, an office visit with a review of software/procedures/tools.

Fee: \$5,000 application fee.

This application form, check and associated documents should be sent to:

*National Center for Economic Gardening
c/o Edward Lowe Foundation
P. O. Box 8
Cassopolis, Michigan 49031-0008*