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## **Gainesville Dollar General Learning Center**

**I. Project:** The East Gainesville Development Task Force, Inc.(EGDTF) Alachua/Bradford Counties WAGES Coalition(WAGES), and Jennings Development Group, Inc.(JDG) have combined to form a unique partnership to increase the employment opportunities for the welfare families in these respective communities.

### **A. Partners**

1. **EGDTF:** This is a community based organization that was started in February of '97 after over 200 citizens came together to address the concerns of one of the older, depressed communities in Gainesville. Of the 20 working groups, 19 expressed a strong desire for more retail opportunities in their community as their #1 concern. Since that time, it has been funded by both the City and County governments for 2 fulltime staff people an appropriated additional monies for programming. EGDTF was the sponsoring applicant for the receipt of Enterprise Florida Grant funds.
2. **WAGES-** This coalition was set up 3 years ago, by Florida law in communities all over the State. Each community appoints its own board directors and is awarded funding by the number of persons qualifying for welfare.
3. **JDG-** It is a local real estate development group that was started in '97 as direct response to the lack of development occurring in East Gainesville. Since that time the company has redeveloped or has under construction over \$8,000,000 in local developments in East Gainesville. They include: a 24,000 sq. ft. commercial project and 112-unit multi-family affordable housing complex.

### **B. Project Providers**

1. **Child Care- Florida Division of Children & Families(DCF) Child Care Resources(CCR)**  
Each WAGES customer is provided a child care voucher as a part of their WAGES benefit package. This coordinated by the DCF and CCR
2. **GED training-Alachua County School Board/ Santa Fe Community College(SFCC)**
3. **Retail Trade Course- SFCC**
  - a. **Class Schedule-**Classes begin 8/24/99 at SFCC Downtown
  - b. **Duration-**3 weeks(6 sessions per year)
  - c. **Retail Trade Certificate-**  
Each graduate will receive a certificate in retail sales along with 9 hours of college credit towards an AA in Business Administration
4. **Interns-WAGES**  
Each person receiving welfare assistance is a part of the WAGES system and has a mandatory 20-30 hour/week work activity requirement in order to receive public funds.
5. **Administration-EGDTF**  
This organization will serve as the coordinating agent for the entire program.

6. Monitoring- BCN Associates, Inc.  
BCN is the administrative agent for the WAGES coalition and will monitor and evaluate the progress of the program on a quarterly basis as defined in the WAGES employment project contract
7. Funding-Enterprise Florida/WAGES/JDG
  - a. Enterprise Florida-  
Providing a \$500,000 grant for the project
  - b. WAGES-  
Providing all of the funds for support services of WAGES customers per Florida law. This includes but is not limited to payment of (child care, transportation, educational training, job placement)
  - c. JDG-  
Providing \$675,000 in private funding secured through a local bank
  - d. County/City Commissioner  
Providing \$125,000 in funding to make the project feasible.
8. Training-Dollar General/Gresham's Sun Surgical
  - a. DG-  
provide a facility for 12-15 WAGES customers to be trained in a 3-month program for 10 years.
  - b. Gresham's Drugs/ Sun Surgical-  
will provide a 10-12 week training program and it will hire graduates as their personnel requirement demand
9. Permanent Employment-WAGES/Retail Federation of Florida  
Each member of the local coalition of the RTF will hire graduates of the program as their employment needs demand.( See Grant proposal for list)
10. Additional Support Services-WAGES One Stop Center  
all additional support services will be provided through this center located next door to the Learning Center. They will include but not be limited to (job placement services, case management, counseling services, computer training)

#### C. Site Description

1. Acreage-3.3 acres with an additional 2.5 acres for expansion possibilities
2. Location-Gainesville, FL Northgate Shopping Center
3. Total Square Footage-28,300 sq.ft.
4. Additional Tenants-
  - a. Agency for Health Care administration
  - b. Gresham's Drug Store
  - c. Beauty Salon
  - d. Barber Shop
  - e. Laundromat
5. DG Space
  - a. Retail Store-7500 sq. ft.
  - b. Administrative Space-1500 s. ft.
6. Price
  - a. Retail-\$4.50/sq. ft.

- b. Adm. Space-10/sq. ft.
- 7. Term- 10 years

#### D. Community Development Incentives

1. Weed & Seed Area-The location of the Learning Center is inside of US Department of Justice designated Weed & Seed Area. The area has received funding for increase police protection and neighborhood clean up. This program also has a requirement for seeding activities like economic development.
2. Proposed Site of Community Redevelopment District- this designation area would allow for property taxes to be reinvested in the area for infrastructure, facade enhancement, and other redevelopment activities.(There are 3 existing districts in the community)
3. Proposed Site Florida Enterprise Zone- the State of Florida has designated 20 communities in the state as Enterprise. Gainesville is a designee. There is a proposal expand the local zone to include the Learning Center location.

#### E. Summary

After meeting with Mr. Derek Young in December of '97, were inspired to pool the resources of our state and County together to provide a unique opportunity for those who need it most, WAGE clients. After visiting three of the DG Learning Center locations(Nashville, Columbia, and Chattanooga), we have taken the strengths of each program and woven into our local community. The state of Florida provides an extraordinary opportunity for the success of the Learning Center concept. Unlike the public housing authority in many other communities the WAGES customers are required by law to participate in some type of work activity on a weekly basis in order maintain their entire public assistance package. The Northgate Employment and Retail Center will provide a unique response to this need. While meeting the timeless requirement of teaching more men how to fish, it additionally provides for the beginnings of the revitalization of an entire community. With its success will come more economic development opportunities and reinvigorated community spirit. We look forward to having Dollar General as a partner in this effort.