



Legislation Text

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Applications to U. S. Department of Justice for Official Recognition of Two Weed and Seed Sites (B)

Operation Weed and Seed is a comprehensive strategy to help communities bring together people and resources to prevent and control crime and improve the quality of life. It is a community-based, innovative, and comprehensive multi-agency approach to law enforcement, crime prevention, and neighborhood restoration. The Executive Office for Weed and Seed (EOWS) provides national leadership as well as management and administration of the program.

The Weed and Seed strategy aims to prevent, control, and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in designated high-crime neighborhoods across the country. It recognizes the importance of linking and coordinating federal, state, and local law enforcement and criminal justice efforts with federal, state, and local social services and private sector and community efforts. It also recognizes the paramount importance of community involvement. The strategy empowers community residents to assist in identifying and solving problems in their neighborhood.

The first step is to develop a Weed and Seed strategy and submit it for Official Recognition (OR). The OR application is a detailed description of a site's Weed and Seed strategy. Communities develop the strategy according to EOWS guidelines. Once completed and submitted to EOWS, review panels determine whether the standards set out in the guidelines have been met and evaluate each site's specific strategy. If approved, a site will receive OR certification enabling it to be considered for future EOWS funding and to receive: 1) preference in obtaining discretionary resources from specific federal agencies, e.g., HUD Drug Elimination Grants; 2) priority for participating in EOWS-sponsored training and technical assistance; and 3) use of the official Weed and Seed logo.

The process for developing a Weed and Seed strategy requires a significant commitment from the local community to engage in strategic planning, collaborate with key stakeholders, and coordinate programs and services. The planning process is undertaken, and a detailed strategic plan created, before completing and submitting an OR application. Planning for a Weed and Seed strategy is beneficial in and of itself; i.e., the working relationships that develop out of the coordination process can, in the long run, be worth more than any grant funding which a site may eventually receive.

Two sites within the City are seeking Official Recognition. The first site is located in the Northeastern portion of the City and encompasses the Pine Forest, Carroll Estates, Village Green, Highland Court Manor, Tree Trail, Varsity Villas Mobile Home Park neighborhoods. This site has been an existing Weed and Seed site but this designation expires this year. This would be a request for recertification for this site.

The second site begins at NW 8th Avenue and moves south encompassing the Pleasant Street/5th Avenue neighborhoods as well as Porters Community before moving east to encompass the Springhill neighborhood. An unsuccessful application was made for part of this site last year.

There is no fiscal impact from the application for Official Recognition. The designation only allows sites to apply for funding at a later date.

The City Commission authorize the City Manager to execute any necessary documents required to pursue the designation of Official Recognition (OR) for the two areas within the City of Gainesville.

