

About SFRPC

The South Florida Regional Planning Council (SFRPC) is a regional planning and public agency whose mission is to work with South Florida's public, private, non-profit, and civic leadership to create a better future for South Florida.

As one of ten regional planning councils in Florida, the SFRPC works with local governments, school boards, area residents, and other private, non-private and public stakeholders to identify issues of concern, opportunities for improvement, and solutions.

History of the Revolving Loan Fund Program

The South Florida Regional Planning Council Revolving Loan Fund Programs (SFRPC-RLF) were first established with several public and private agencies before being transferred to the SFRPC. The RLFs were created as a result of the devastation of Hurricane Andrew, which on August 24, 1992 ravaged large tracts of Miami-Dade County. Hurricane Andrew stands as one of the most damaging and costly natural disasters in the history of the United States, surpassed only by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Many businesses, especially in the southern area of the county, faced insolvency after commercial and industrial buildings, agriculture land and tourist facilities were destroyed by the hurricane. Although recovery from Hurricane Andrew is no longer the most urgent economic development priority for the South Florida region, many small/medium size businesses seeking financial capital to grow their businesses are unable to obtain traditional financing from conventional lenders. However, as the regional economy grows, the SFRPC Revolving Loan Fund has served as an instrument to strengthen and achieve the stated goals of the SFRPC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

The SFRPC knows that the best economic development plan for the region is to develop its small and medium size businesses. The SFRPC focuses its economic development activities on technical assistance and capacity building, enhanced coordination, communication, and infrastructure development. In our judgement, these activities provide the greatest long-term return on investment and are the best use of limited resources.

Successes

The SFRPC-RLF business loans are generally made to existing small businesses but could include those in their first year of business if referred from an affiliated business mentoring program. Particular focus is given to those small businesses relocating, expanding, or currently doing business in the State and Federal Empowerment Zones and Brownfields Target Areas. All types of legal business entities are targeted whether sole proprietorship, partnership, S-Corporation, C-Corporation, or Limited Liability Corporation.

These targeted businesses generally need financing and technical assistance. Their needs are identified through past and present small business outreach programs, referrals from Small Business Development Centers, as well as local commercial Small Business Administration lenders and by the local economic development corporations.

The overall goal of the SFRPC revolving loan programs is to create private sector jobs within the regional economy. Additionally, the strategy is to diversify and strengthen the economic base and stimulate private investment.

Since 2002, the RLF program has serviced more than 410 loans and provided funding to area businesses. The loans have helped fund projects totaling over \$112 million. The total amount loaned to these businesses was more than \$37 million. As a result of these investments more than 8,000 jobs have been created or saved. These projects were funded with RLF monies because conventional funding was not available.

The SFRPC targets firms involved in a broad cross section of commercial sectors including small manufacturing firms. The SFRPC successful businesses range from companies such as an interior design firm launching their first furniture line; a rapidly growing information technology services company; and the largest grower of bean and alfalfa sprouts in Florida.

Businesses who receive financing through the RLF program can also access additional support and technical assistance by participating in the SFRPC's small business mentoring program. The mentoring program consists of counseling from a business consulting firm that specializes in organizational development, training and institutional design for small and large businesses. The mentoring program includes a review of the company's financials, organizational structure, and overall operation techniques. A report with findings and recommendations is then prepared for the business owner.

Impact of SFRPC-RLF

- The RLF financing program has positively impacted South Florida by strengthening the local economy through loans to predominately existing businesses that are unable to obtain conventional financing. These investments have led to increased sales tax revenue, job creation, and diversification of the economy.
- The RLF financing strategy is proactive in nature and scope and is designed to stimulate private investment. RLF funds are used to leverage private dollars at a minimum rate of \$2 of private investment for every \$1 dollar from the RLF. Since inception of the RLF, the private/public project investment is more than \$15.2 million.
- The goals of the SFRPC-CEDS and the RLF include diversification and expansion of employment opportunities to ensure the creation of jobs with better pay and benefits for the region's workforce. Throughout the SFRPC program areas it works to address quality of life issues, including education, transportation, access to services, and safety in order to make South Florida a more attractive location for domestic and international talent and businesses. The SFRPC uses economic development resource agencies and programs to involve small and minority businesses in disadvantage areas by encouraging the retention of local businesses and providing job-training opportunities.