

Title: A winning, sustainable strategy to combat neighborhood graffiti

Put simply, we have a graffiti problem in Adams County. For years, this was addressed through a 3rd-party vendor who averaged just over 200 cleanups a year. But the graffiti continued to grow. So this year, we decided to become aggressive with a new program on-track to *triple* total clean-ups in a year, and do it for less money. Our cost savings are especially unique because we reuse paint from a local recycling facility whose paint materials save us 50% on total costs. Our results are the focus of this case study.

2. When and how was the program, policy or initiative originally conceived in your jurisdiction? *100 word maximum.*

The program was initiated in September of 2014. We studied our program as it existed then, saw we were spending \$60,000 for a 3rd-party vendor who did slightly more than 200 cases a year, and decided we could do better.

Our code compliance supervisor proposed that we provide graffiti abatement as a direct service rather than through a 3rd-party vendor. My staff and I then explored costs to vertically integrate the operation and proposed it with benchmarks for a 20% improvement in the results. Our success to-date is already well over a 100% improvement.

3. How exactly is the program or policy innovative? How has your innovation changed previous processes, products or services? *100 word maximum.*

The program is innovative for the fact that our technician employs a waiver agreement with each victim that makes us a partner in their need. Our waiver agreement allows us to not only clean the graffiti when it's spotted on the first incident but also gives us the authority to clean up future graffiti whenever it occurs, avoiding the redundancy of gaining property-owner approval again. In this arrangement, we often clean up future incidences of graffiti before the property owner is even aware the vandalism occurred. In addition, we use reclaimed paint purchased from a local business at 50% of the cost.

4. Explain how the program or initiative substantially stretched or improved the boundaries of ordinary governmental operations. *200 word maximum.*

The program originally cost taxpayers \$60,000 for 215 graffiti cleanups a year. The new program costs taxpayers \$55,000 in recurring costs but results in what we estimate will be 800 cleanups by the end of this year. The efficiencies are clear but what's best is that the program is now a proactive measure in the community. Whereas, in the past, citizens had to call the vendor's hotline for service, our employee for this new program actively patrols our community, builds relationships, and clears up graffiti often before a complaint can be issued. Roughly 90% of all graffiti clean-ups are initiated without a complaint by our residents.

5. What individuals or groups are considered the primary initiators of your program? How does the innovation engage stakeholders or demonstrate high performance teaming? Were strategic partnerships and/or community networks developed as a result of the innovation? *200 word maximum.*

Our program was initiated by the Community and Economic Development Department and engages a key stakeholder with our Sustainability Office. This office connected our team with a local vendor called repurposedMATERIALS that reclaims used paint for future use. With our

partnership, we are able to avoid purchasing new paint, save 50% on material costs, advance reuse in our area, and support a local business.

6. If a private consultant was used please describe their involvement, identify the consultant and/or firm and provide contact information. *100 word maximum.*

N/A

7. To what extent do you believe your program or policy initiative is potentially replicable within other jurisdictions and why? To your knowledge, have any other jurisdictions or organizations established programs or implemented policies modeled specifically on this project? Please provide verification of the replication. *200 word maximum.*

The program can be easily replicated in any jurisdiction that already employs financial resources towards graffiti abatement. If said jurisdiction uses a third-party vendor, it is as simple as switching to an in-house solution with some upfront investment in capital and staffing. If jurisdictions have already done that, then our waiver system may be of benefit. Our waivers allows staff to continue to abate graffiti in areas that suffer repeat offenses without seeking additional approvals. This builds greater relationships between our residents and their government as they know they can count on us to be proactive to their need. In addition, the reclaimed paint program can be a replicated partnership with a local hazard materials collection facility or similar local business.

One government that does this very well is Thornton, Colorado. Their website is <http://user.govoutreach.com/thornton/faq.php?cid=9463>

8. What were the costs? What were the savings? *100 word maximum.*

Total Cost to-date is \$35,000 for upfront capital (truck and pressure washer/paint sprayer) and \$55,000 for staffing costs for a new FTE.

Savings include \$5,000 less in total recurring costs. The old program cost \$60,000 in recurring costs.

Also, most significant of all is that clean-ups cost \$279 per case in the old program. With the new program, our cost per case is only \$68.75. This lowers our cost per case by 75%

9. Please describe the most significant obstacle(s) encountered thus far by your program. How have they been dealt with? Which ones remain? *200 word maximum.*

Our only obstacle thus far has been the threats our graffiti technician has received. Vandals in the area have become very frustrated by our efforts and have vandalized our clean-up sites. There has also been an incident where our technician was likely shot at by an unknown suspect. These threats have been very disconcerting but we maintain strong coordination and support from our local sheriff's office and police departments and our technician continues to work against these forces.

10. What outcomes did this program or policy have? What baseline data did you collect? How did you measure the change based on the intervention, and why do you believe in the credibility of this assessment? *200 word maximum.*

Our outcomes are highlighted in prior answers and are based solely on the simple data of our costs, our case load, and our current spending pattern.

11. Has the program received any press or other media coverage to date? If yes, please list the sources and briefly describe relevant coverage. *100 word maximum.*

Our program has been featured twice in the local news television coverage for the Denver metro area. First time for its sharp increase in effectiveness and second time for its eco-friendly angle (google: greenfiti). Our program has also been featured twice in the Denver Post in the form of news articles, one of which was a front page story in the Local News section of the Sunday edition.

12. Please provide web links where the innovation can be seen/tested (in the case of something that is web-based) *100 word maximum.*

This is not a web-based program and thus we do not have links.

13. Please provide any key references and their contact information who can be interviewed/called to discuss the innovation and its impact. *100 word maximum.*

Nick Kittle--our organization's Performance, Innovation and Sustainability Manager
720.523.6287
Damon Carson, repurposedMATERIALS CEO damon@repurposedmaterials.com

Joaquin Flores--our graffiti technician
720-523-6800

14. You've been to a lot of conferences. TLG should be a unique experience for everyone. Describe how your case study presentation will be different than other conference presentations. *200 word maximum.*
- How will you make the session creative and unique?
 - How do you plan to be both entertaining and educational?
 - Include a description of how your session will facilitate group activities and/or interaction.

Simply showing the many unique forms of graffiti we have dealt with is enjoyable. Graffiti artists are quite creative! Along with these visuals and our data, all of which can be shared by our team, we will provide video coverage from our Communications Department. Their work in covering this program forms a 5 minute video that summarizes the program nicely.

A basic summary of our presentation would include the following:

A showcase of the graffiti in our area

Data of how the former program performed

Details of our change in the program

Data on the results thus far (which are quite dramatic)

Testimonials from residents

Video spot from our Communications department

Total cost breakdown, sample waiver agreement

Questions and Answers

15. Anything else you would like to add? *200 word maximum.*

This program combines multiple efficiency innovations in service delivery, a reduction in costs, supports a local business, and is environmentally sustainable by reusing paint that would otherwise have to be incinerated. All in one year. It's a win-win-win that can be modeled by other communities.

Thank you for your consideration!