



TLG and LMC 2016 Case Study Application
Future Ready Communities



DUE: September 4, 2015

Email to: Ryan Spillers at rspillers@transformgov.org

COVER PAGE

- 1. Case Study Title: Do More Blue "Jeans"
- 2. Case Study Category (Select only one, selection identified by highlighting your choice):

Planning for Your Future

Creating an Inclusive Community

Reinventing Local Government

Community Networks

Blinders

- 3. Jurisdiction Name: Town of Queen Creek, AZ

- 4. Jurisdiction Population (US Census): 32,236 (June 30, 2014 Census Data)

- 5. Would you like the application to be considered for our Rapid Fire Session? (Rapid Fire presentations are fast-paced, entertaining, interactive presentations. Each jurisdiction will have five minutes to make their presentations using 15 PPT slides set on auto-forward primarily containing photos/graphics. Participants will be seated at round tables to facilitate an energetic idea exchange. A cash bar will be available.)

YES

NO

- 6. Project Leader (Primary Contact for case study notification):
 Name: Ramona Simpson
 Title: Environment Programs Supervisor
 Department: Public Works
 Phone Number: 480-358-3831
 eMail: Ramona.Simpson@queencreek.org
 US Mail Address, including zip code: 22358 S. Ellsworth Rd. Queen Creek, AZ
 Twitter Account: _____

List additional presenters contact information below:

1. Presentation title and description of the innovation. *100 word maximum.*

Do More Blue "Jeans" is an innovative, residential curbside textile (clothing) recycling collection program. A public-private partnership, the resident is mailed a special textile recycling bag, which they can put into their Blue recycling cart on their regular recycling collection day. The hauler transports the material to the facility where the material is sorted and shredded, then delivered to a textile processor, which recycles them into eco-friendly, rolled home insulation. The partners donate \$0.10 for every pound collected to the Arizona Boys & Girls Club of Queen Creek.

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

As a means of creating additional waste diversion opportunities for residents, the Town of Queen Creek worked with several partners to brainstorm the textile program in 2012.

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

The Do More Blue Jeans program was the first of its kind. A residential curbside recycling program is innovative because residents can use the specially manufactured textile recycling bag and place it directly into their recycling cart. In addition, the material is recycled into eco-friendly home insulation or other products. Finally, the local Boys & Girls Club benefits from the proceeds of the program. This is convenient, environmentally minded, and original in the collection and processing of textiles in a municipal setting.

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

For Solid Waste and Recycling Services, finding new and innovative ways to recycle and divert non-traditional materials, and provide an avenue for supporting local charitable organizations at the same time is thinking outside the box. This program gave the Town opportunities to discuss diversion in new ways with residents, especially in classroom education programs. While clothing "recycling" is not unique, actually being able to see, touch, and participate in and see the end result of the clothing recycling was energizing and engaging. This also provided opportunities for discussion at the Town's Citizen Leadership Institute meetings and other adult education programs. Having an easy and convenient way to recycle and talking about what products can be made from recycled clothing helped residents look at disposing of clothing in a new way.

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.*

The program is a public-private partnership between the Town, Right-Away-Disposal, the Material Recovery Facility and Clothing Processor (United and Phoenix Fibers), and the Boys & Girls Club of Queen Creek. All of the partners were very engaged; through collaboration the partners have been able to address challenges and are prepared to continue to improve and develop new avenues for education and outreach. One

significant improvement over the previous year was to include not only the above mentioned partners in the program, but also to allow for local community businesses to "sponsor" the program and become supporters and advocates. Sponsor logos were printed directly on the textile bag and marketing materials were included in the envelope with the bag. Sponsors are recognized on the Town's website, in related news releases and other outreach materials. Last year's title sponsor was the local community college, Rio Salado. This provided an avenue for them to reach new markets, while supporting their own culture of environmentalism. Another top sponsor was the Olive Mill, who also has a very deep culture of recycling and environmental ideals. These two sponsors worked very well with the Town's program and also supported our local business community.

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

No private consultant was used for this program.

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.*

While the program is very unique because of the private contractors working together (the hauler and the MRF), this program can be replicated in other jurisdictions if the municipality or waste hauler can reach out to textile processors in their area to see if there is a way to transport the material. As with most waste/recycling programs, transportation can be the most expensive component of the program. Finding innovative ways to collect and transport clothing can be especially difficult since it is a very heavy material. Many jurisdictions have textile recycling, but it is usually a drop off bin type of program. There are issues with these types of programs for contamination and/or "junky" drop off sites. In addition, the end product for these materials is most usually the material being stripped into rags, which is a form of reuse, but the materials being "recycled" into other usage products is very innovative. This program is unique in its concept of recycling clothing, including community partners, and providing avenues of charitable giving.

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

Total expenses for the program were \$21,000. Total revenue from sponsorships was \$9,000. The remaining \$12,000 was funded through the Town's enterprise fund.

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.*

Developing a bag that can withstand the collection, compaction, and delivery of clothing without breaking and contaminating the material has been the most significant obstacle thus far. In addition, the bags can only be manufactured cheaply overseas, so waiting for the actual product is challenging to coordinate with printing, design, and other vendors and sponsors. Other challenges have to do with the control of weighing and tracking the material. The current bag appears to be a tough enough bag to withstand the process, although a drawstring instead of an attached string needs to be implemented to avoid

the bag opening during transport. The time constraints of the bag ordering and delivery will be accounted for in the development for the next annual program. More control over the material is being established by having the contracted hauler weigh the bags before delivery to the MRF. Long-term partners for the program are still being developed to help the program be sustainable and self-funded. The Town is working on expanding the education and outreach efforts surrounding the program to encourage more participation, education, and understanding about the program and how it benefits the community.

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.*

To date, with only two bag mailings and one drop-off bin location, the Town has diverted over 27 tons of textiles from the landfill and recycled into other usable products. The program partners have donated over \$3,000 to the local Boys & Girls Club and the Town has raised awareness of clothing recycling opportunities and the importance of diverting from the landfill.

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.*

The program received significant national media coverage in USA Today, Waste & Recycling News, Earth 911 and 1-800-RECYCLING. Municipalities from across the country inquired about the program including cities and towns from the following states: Florida, Texas, Massachusetts, California, and Missouri. As a result, many of them are now creating conversations and developing new ideas on textile recycling opportunities.

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

Information regarding the textile program is available online at QueenCreek.org/recycling.

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.*

Ramona Simpson, Environmental Programs Supervisor, Town of Queen Creek, 480-358-3831
Larry Williams, Sales & Marketing Director, Right-Away-Disposal, 480-983-9100

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.

An interactive Prezi type of presentation.

Games and activities to gauge the knowledge of textile recycling for the audiences.

Group discussion on textile collection/recycling issues, challenges, and opportunities in the various attendee's communities.

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

While the Town of Queen Creek is small, it is very innovative and creative in efforts for sustainability and environmental outreach. The Town has implemented several recycling and diversion programs which rival "bigger" more experienced regional communities. The is considered a leader in the region of the Phoenix-Metro area with can-do philosophy related to environmental goals. The Town is not afraid to try new, outside the box thinking regarding waste and recycling efforts and hope to help others start the conversation in their jurisdictions to do the same.