

REQUEST FOR INITIAL GRANT PROPOSALS (RFIP)
Economic Development Strategies that Support Environmentally-Friendly Development

OVERVIEW INFORMATION

FEDERAL AGENCY NAME: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation; Development, Community and Environment Division (DCED).

FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TITLE: *Economic Development Strategies that Support Environmentally-Friendly Development Request for Initial Proposals (RFIP)*

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: This is an initial announcement of a funding opportunity.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: *ECONDVL-04*

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER: 66.611, Environmental Policy and Innovation Grants, authorized under Delegation of Authority I-47.

DATES: Initial proposals must be submitted to U.S. EPA by Monday, July 19, 2004 by 5:00 PM East Coast Time. Award announcements are expected to be made in November 2004.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation; Development, Community and Environment Division (DCED) announces a Request for Initial Proposals (RFIP) on the topic of *Economic Development Strategies that Support Environmentally-Friendly Development*. This is an initial announcement of a funding opportunity. The funding opportunity number is *ECONDVL-04* and it falls under the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* CFDA Number 66.611, Environmental Policy and Innovation Grants, authorized under Delegation of Authority I-47. Initial proposals must be submitted to U.S. EPA by July 19, 2004 by 5:00PM East Coast Time. Award announcements are expected to be made in November 2004 and the project period will extend until November 2007.

DCED is seeking proposals from eligible organizations to identify and describe specific economic development strategies that have supported smart growth outcomes. Smart growth development practices support national environmental and public health goals by protecting sensitive watersheds, minimizing water quality impacts from development, reducing air emissions by increasing transportation choices, and encouraging cleanup and sustainable redevelopment of Brownfields. Smart growth development is characterized by the following principles: mixing of land uses; encouraging more compact development, providing a range of housing opportunities and transportation choices; fostering distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place; preserving open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas; and strengthening and directing development towards existing communities.

The International Economic Development Council defines the goal of economic development as "improving the economic well being of a community through efforts that entail job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements, and quality of life." Communities nationwide employ a variety of techniques to attain economic development goals and the outcomes have differed widely. EPA is interested in finding examples where economic development strategies have protected environmental resources by supporting smart growth outcomes.

EPA anticipates awarding one assistance agreement under this solicitation and expects to have approximately \$40,000 available for first year funding with a ceiling of \$150,000 for the life of the agreement. Final agreements will be negotiated for a 3-year budget and project period with

future funding dependent on funding availability, agency priorities, and applicant performance. The awards will be made through a cooperative agreement which entails substantial federal involvement, including: EPA review and approval of project phases; participation in and collaboration on various phases of the work; participation in key meetings and/or conference calls; and review of all draft and final products.

Only one application per applicant will be accepted. Eligible applicants include (1) Incorporated nonprofit (or not-for-profit) agencies, institutions, and organizations incorporated or domiciled in the United States, and (2) public (state, county, regional or local) agencies, institutions and organizations. Applicants must be located in, and project activities must be conducted within, the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or a territory or possession of the United States. Nonprofit organizations described in section 501 (c) (4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. For profit organizations also are not eligible to apply. Cost-sharing is not required.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

Section 1: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Development, Community and Environment Division (DCED) in U.S. EPA's Office of Policy Economics and Innovation is issuing this request for initial proposals (RFIP). DCED focuses on smart growth issues of regional and national significance. Smart growth development practices support national environmental and public health goals by protecting sensitive watersheds, minimizing water quality impacts from development, reducing air emissions by increasing transportation choices, and encouraging cleanup and sustainable redevelopment of Brownfields.

Smart growth is development that serves the economy, the community, public health, and the environment. It is often characterized by a common set of development principles:

- mix land uses;
- take advantage of compact building design;
- create a range of housing opportunities and choices;
- create walkable neighborhoods;
- foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place;
- preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas;
- strengthen and direct development towards existing communities;
- provide a variety of transportation choices;
- make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective;
- encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

DCED is seeking proposals from eligible organizations to identify and describe specific economic development strategies that have supported smart growth outcomes. The International Economic Development Council defines the goal of economic development as "improving the economic well being of a community through efforts that entail job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements, and quality of life." Communities nationwide employ a variety of techniques to attain these goals and the outcomes have differed widely. DCED is interested in finding examples where economic development strategies have protected environmental resources by supporting smart growth outcomes.

DCED is seeking proposals under which the applicant would identify economic development strategies that achieve the goals of creating and retaining jobs and improving the tax base and quality of life while supporting smart growth development. It is expected that the applicant, in cooperation with DCED, would identify specific economic development strategies that support smart growth. Examples could include, but are not limited to: "Main Street" programs that

revitalize existing commercial areas, targeted tax incentives and infrastructure investments in smart growth corridors, downtown revitalization efforts, and jobs-housing balancing strategies.

It is expected that the applicant would work with DCED to create a final product using a case study approach to describe the economic development strategies, how they achieve smart growth, and how they've met the community's economic goals. The examples should be from rural, suburban, and urban settings. The findings would be presented in both a quantitative and narrative fashion and include specific information on the economic impacts. These economic measures may include, but are not limited to, job creation/retention, new business and housing creation, changes in vacancy rates, and tax revenues. It is anticipated that the document would also discuss the quality-of-life benefits conferred by the selected economic development projects, which could include environmental improvements, greater access to open spaces, and expanded transportation alternatives.

The applicant should have demonstrated experience in the analysis of economic development and smart growth strategies, as evidenced by past activities and projects. In developing findings, the applicant would be expected to work with a wide body of stakeholders, including: chambers of commerce, city and county economic development agencies, and others who have specific knowledge of the impacts of the selected strategies.

DCED anticipates that this may be the first in a series of studies looking at the relationship between economic development and smart growth. The applicant should describe possible future phases of research that could be funded in years two and three of the assistance agreement. Some examples could include: measuring and comparing the fiscal benefits of built smart growth projects to traditional developments in the same region and examining the impact of urban form on economic outcomes.

Section 2: AWARD INFORMATION

U.S. EPA expects to have approximately \$40,000 available for proposals under this RFIP for this funding cycle. This is subject to availability of funding within the agency's final FY04 budget. EPA expects to award one assistance agreement under this solicitation. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit proposals for first-year activities for approximately \$40,000 or less. Final grants may be negotiated for budget and project periods of up to three years, with funding for future years dependent on funding availability, agency priorities and applicant performance. A ceiling of approximately \$150,000 for a three year agreement is suggested. Applicants should provide detailed descriptions of the activities proposed for the first-year under this competition, as well as a description of what follow-up activities would be conducted in subsequent years if additional funding is made available. The assistance agreement awards will be in the form of cooperative agreements which will include substantive involvement on the part of U.S. EPA. This involvement may include: US EPA review and approval of project phases; participation in and collaboration on various phases of the work; participation in key meetings and/or conference calls; and review of all draft and final products. The expected time span for any cooperative agreements awarded under this RFIP (i.e., the project and budget period) is expected to be from November 2004 through November 2007. EPA plans to use FY04 funds to support this assistance agreement; funding may not occur until early FY05 (FY05 begins 10/1/2004 and runs through 9/30/2005). EPA reserves the discretion to select additional awardees from this solicitation for possible funding in the second or third quarter of FY05 (i.e. January 2005 - June 2005). Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are eligible to compete with applications for new awards.

Section 3: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Section 3.1: ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include (1) Incorporated nonprofit (or not-for-profit) agencies, institutions, and organizations incorporated or domiciled in the United States, and (2) public (state, county,

regional or local) agencies, institutions and organizations. Applicants must be located in, and project activities must be conducted within, the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or a territory or possession of the United States. Nonprofit organizations described in section 501 (c) (4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. For profit organizations also are not eligible to apply. Please see section 4.5 for information on eligible activities and costs.

Section 3.2. COST-SHARING OR MATCHING

There are no match or cost-sharing requirements. However, the degree to which the project budget effectively uses EPA funds will be considered as an evaluation criterion. Allowable costs for nonprofit organizations are defined in OMB circular A-122; allowable costs for public entities are defined in OMB circular A-87.

Section 3.3: OTHER

Only one application per applicant will be accepted. To be eligible, applicants will need to meet all of the following threshold criteria. Threshold criteria will be applied on a pass/fail basis. Failure to meet any of them will render an application ineligible; ineligible applications will not be reviewed.

Threshold Criterion 1: Smart Growth focus

The proposal must embody, result in, or encourage smart growth. The proposal must focus on the issues, subjects, and activities targeted by this RFIP and explained under the section entitled "Funding Opportunity Description." The proposal must clearly demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the smart growth and economic development issues addressed by the project, and the applicant must clearly demonstrate expertise in smart growth issues. U.S. EPA will use the smart growth definition outlined in Section 1 ("Funding Opportunity Description") to apply this criterion.

Threshold Criterion 2: Allowable Activities

The proposal must consist of activities authorized under one or more of the following U.S. EPA grant authorities: Clean Air Act section 103 (b) (3); Clean Water Act section 104 (b) (3); Solid Waste Disposal Act section 8001, as amended; Toxic Substances Control Act section 10; Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act section 20, as supplemented by P.L. 106-74; and Safe Drinking Water Act sections 1442 (a) and (c). Most of these statutes authorize grants for research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies. The project activities must advance the state of knowledge or transfer information. The term "demonstrations" can encompass the first instance of a pollution control or prevention technique, or an innovative application of a previously used method. The term "research" may include the application of established practices when they contribute to learning about an environmental concept or problem.

Threshold Criterion 3: Environmental Focus

The project's general focus must be one that is specified in the statutes listed above under threshold criterion 2. For most statutes the project must address the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of air, water, or solid/hazardous waste pollution. In the case of grants under the Toxic Substances Control Act for the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, the project must "(carry) out the purposes of the Act." The overarching focus must be on the statutory purpose of the applicable grant authorities, which in most cases is "to prevent or control pollution." In light of this, proposals relating to topics which are sometimes included within the term "environment" such as recreation, conservation, restoration, or habitat protection should describe the relationship of these topics to the statutorily required purpose of pollution prevention and/or control.

Threshold Criterion 4: Serve a Public Purpose

Proposals must clearly demonstrate how the proposed activities will be of primary benefit to the applicant organization and the public at large. Proposals must clearly demonstrate how the

proposed activities directly support the applicant organization's overall mission and long-term goals.

Threshold Criterion 5: Complete Applications That Are Submitted on Time

To be eligible, applications must be complete (as defined in section 4.2) and must be submitted in accordance with the provisions outlined in section 4.3.

Section 4: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Section 4.1: HOW TO GET APPLICATION MATERIALS

This announcement provides all of the instructions needed for preparing an initial proposal. While there are no required application forms or kits, there are format and content requirements which are described below under section 4.2, "Content and Form of Application Submission." Paper copies of this announcement can be obtained by contacting the EPA personnel listed in section 7. Electronic copies will be available on the DCED web site (www.epa.gov/smartgrowth).

Section 4.2: CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

To be considered complete and eligible for review, all proposals must include a cover letter, summary information page, project description, budget, documentation of qualifications, and (if applicable) confirmation of partner participation. Proposals should not exceed 10 pages (see below for additional details). The following format is required for all proposals:

Cover letter (does not count against page limit)

The cover letter that accompanies your proposal must be signed by an official with the authority to commit your organization to the project and should be written on your organization's official letterhead.

Summary information page (does not count against page limit)

The summary information page should be one-page long and include the following information:

--the title and number of this request for initial proposals (*Economic Development Strategies that Support Environmentally-Friendly Development*; ECONDV-04)

--project title and location

--applicant name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address

--name and title of project contact (including how to reach if different from above)

--type of applicant organization (e.g., nonprofit, local government, state government, etc.)

--summary budget information (amount requested from U.S. EPA; amount and source of any matching funds)

-- 5 to 10 line abstract of the proposal

Project description (no longer than 10 page sides)

The project description must provide a concise overview of the project and should include a preliminary workplan outlining all major tasks, products, and timetables. The narrative must also address how the proposal meets each of the threshold and selection criteria, and what environmental results the applicant expects. If other project partners or funding sources are involved, their role and contribution must be clearly defined. In reviewing the project description, reviewers will not consider any pages over the 10 page side limit. Project descriptions must use no smaller than 10 point type, and should have page margins all-around of at least one inch.

Budget (does not count against page limit)

The project budget should include personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, and other relevant direct costs. Indirect costs should also be included. Entries under each category should be explained in a budget narrative (does not count against page limit.)

Documentation of qualifications (does not count against page limit)

The applicant must include short profiles of all principal staff who will have a major role in the project. Where applicable, this includes principal staff from partner organizations. This includes contractors if contractors will be used. These profiles must specifically address each individual's experience with smart growth issues and their areas of expertise related to the project.

Confirmation of partner participation and/or match (does not count against page limit)

If applicable, applicants who are partnering with other organizations, agencies or institutions must include a letter from the partner, on partner letterhead, indicating the partner's role in the project. Each partner letter must be signed by an individual with the authority to commit the partner to the project. Letters confirming partner participation must be included in the initial proposal package and will not be accepted separately. Proposals relying on partner participation which are missing documentation of that participation will be considered ineligible. Proposals that would direct some of the funds awarded through this RFIP to partners must provide information on the competitive process used to select those partners.

Attachments (do not count against page limit)

Applicants are encouraged to include copies of relevant products that they have created (e.g. research papers, articles, presentations) that demonstrate their expertise in analyzing economic development issues related to smart growth and their programmatic capabilities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING HOW APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED AND WHAT WILL HAPPEN FOLLOWING SELECTION

Applicants must submit one original and four copies of their full proposal. If attachments are included, five copies should be provided (no original required.) E-mail and fax submissions will not be accepted. Following selection, successful applicants will be required to make a formal request for funding assistance (i.e., federal form SF 424 and associated documentation) and a detailed workplan. These items should not be provided with the initial proposal. Applicants should be aware that there may be a very quick turnaround required if they are asked to submit a formal request for funding assistance. EPA expects that these documents will need to be prepared and returned to EPA within 2 - 4 weeks of notification of selection.

Section 4.3: SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

U.S. EPA must receive proposals by 5 PM East Coast time, Monday, July 19, 2004. No late proposals will be accepted. No fax or e-mail submissions will be accepted. Postmarks or meter stamps will not be sufficient documentation of on-time delivery.

Section 4.4: INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

All applicants should be aware that formal requests for assistance (i.e., SF 424 and associated documentation) may be subject to intergovernmental review under Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Applicants should contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for further information. There is a list of these contacts at the following web site: <http://whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

Section 4.5: FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Funding is only available for the activities authorized under one or more of the U.S. EPA grant authorities cited in section 3.3, threshold criteria 2 and 3. Funding will not be permitted for construction activity, lobbying, or entertainment expenses. Pre-award costs and equipment costs are allowable only with the written consent of the designated EPA project officer. Allowable costs for nonprofit organizations are defined in OMB circular A-122; allowable costs for public entities are defined in OMB circular A-87. All procurement actions conducted by recipients (e.g.,

contracting out part of the work under the assistance agreement) should be conducted in a manner that provides open and free competition to the maximum extent practical.

Section 4.6: OTHER SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must submit one original and four copies of their full proposal (the full proposal includes the cover letter, summary information page, project description, budget, documentation of qualifications, attachments, and -if applicable, partner participation). If attachments are included, five copies should be provided (no original required.) All applications must be submitted in hardcopy in accordance with the requirements set forward above. No fax or e-mail submissions will be accepted. Postmarks or meters will not be considered sufficient documentation of on-time delivery.

The delivery address for submitting your proposal will vary depending on whether you are mailing your proposal or arranging for hand delivery.

If you're sending your proposal via hand delivery (e.g., UPS, Federal Express, courier or some other means) send it to:

Mary Kay Santore
USEPA – DCED
EPA West Building, Room 1416K
1301 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004

If you are mailing your proposal, send it to:

Mary Kay Santore
USEPA - DCED
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW
MC 1807T
Washington, DC 20460

Please note that there may be substantial delays in conventional mail service to U.S. EPA due to heightened security screening.

Section 5: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

5.1: SELECTION CRITERIA

If the proposal meets the threshold criteria described in section 3.3 above, it will then be evaluated against the following selection criteria:

Evaluation factors:

1. Degree to which the proposing organization demonstrates technical expertise in-house or through partnerships in the fields of economic development and smart growth.
2. Degree to which the proposing organization is an appropriate representative for the issues dealt with in the assistance agreement, is likely to be viewed as an authority on the subject, or is partnering with an organization that meets these requirements—as demonstrated through previous activities and projects.
3. Quality of the analytical approach.
4. Quality of the proposed final product.

5. Degree to which the project approach or findings are replicable, serve as a learning tool, and will be disseminated to appropriate audiences.

6. Programmatic capability and likelihood of success.

Proposals will be scored high, medium, or low against each of the evaluation factors using a numerical scale of 1 through 5, with 1 being low and 5 being high. All factors will be weighted equally.

5.2: REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

EPA will evaluate each of the selection criteria above based on information provided in the proposal and any attachment provided. In evaluating criterion 6 -- programmatic capability -- EPA will consider the qualification of key personnel as well as the applicant's past performance administering projects funded by U.S. EPA or other federal agencies. Applicants should discuss their performance history in their proposals and provide contacts for U.S. EPA to obtain additional information. If applicants have not received federal funding before, they should provide other information that would help demonstrate their organization's programmatic capabilities. This might include but is not limited to administration of programs funded through state grants or foundations.

5.3. ANTICIPATED ANNOUNCEMENT AND AWARD DATES

See section 6.1

Section 6: AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

6.1: AWARD NOTICES

Successful applicants will receive an official notice of award from EPA's grants management office.

EPA will announce successful recipients on the U.S. EPA smart growth web site (www.epa.gov/smartgrowth). This information will be posted within 30 days after U.S. EPA's grant administration division issues a written offer of award to the recipient. U.S. EPA anticipates that awards will be announced in November 2004.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via mail or e-mail in the fall of 2004. Applicants who do not pass threshold screening will be notified during the summer of 2004 before final award decisions are made.

Applicants should be aware that they are not authorized to begin performance on a project until they have received their official award document from the EPA's grant office. No pre-award costs may be incurred without EPA's approval; pre-award costs are undertaken at the recipient's risk.

6.2: ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must comply with the standard requirements, terms and conditions of EPA assistance agreements. Funded activities must be allowable under EPA statutory authority (see section 3). All recipients must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number on their formal SF424 applications. A DUNS number can be obtained by calling 1-866-705-5711. A DUNS number is not required for initial proposals.

6.3: REPORTING

Recipients will be required to submit quarterly progress reports and will have to participate in annual reviews of their projects with their U.S. EPA project officer. A project officer will be designated at the time of the award of this cooperative agreement; that project officer will work in partnership with the recipient.

Section 7: AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have questions about this solicitation, please contact:

Mary Kay Santore
USEPA – DCED
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW (MC 1807T)
Washington, DC 20460
202-566-2859
santore.marykay@epa.gov

Answers to frequently asked questions will be posted on the U.S. EPA smart growth web site (www.epa.gov/smartgrowth). The only pre-application assistance available under this competition will be related to clarifying the requirements of the RFIP.

Section 8: OTHER INFORMATION

Both initial proposals and formal request for funding are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. This means that anyone can request, and receive, copies of them. Applicants should clearly mark information they consider confidential. U.S. EPA will make final confidentiality decisions in accordance with agency regulations (40CFR part 2, subpart B).

Any disputes regarding funding decisions will be resolved in accordance with 40 CFR part 30 or 31, depending on the applicant. U.S. EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards.

AMENDMENTS

This amendment is being issued to clarify the eligibility criteria listed under Section 3.1. Tribal agencies, institutions and organizations are eligible applicants under this RFIP, as are individuals.