

evaluates the proposals using the general evaluation criteria set forth in 13 CFR 304.1 and 304.2 and the supplemental evaluation criteria set out in part VI of the previous notice published on April 9, 2003 (68 FR 17520). Proposals that meet these threshold criteria will then be evaluated by the panel using the following criteria of approximate equal weight:

(1) The quality of a proposal's response to the Scope of Work and other requirements described in section VI below;

(2) The ability of the prospective applicant to successfully carry out the proposed activities; and

(3) Cost to the Federal government.

For the information dissemination proposal, the panel will also apply the following two criteria:

(1) How the proposal demonstrates partnership, particularly at the national level, between various economic development organizations, and

(2) The amount of the non-Federal share.

The Assistant Secretary for Economic Development is the Selecting Official. He may not make any selection, or he may substitute one of the lower rated proposals, if he determines that it better meets the overall objectives of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended (Pub. L. 89-136, 42 U.S.C. 3121 *et seq.*), and as further amended by Pub. L. 105-393.

If a proposal is selected, EDA will provide the proponent with an Application for Federal Assistance (OMB Control Number 0610-0094).

VI. Areas of Special Interest

EDA is inviting proposals for National Technical Assistance, Training, Research, and Evaluation as described below.

A. Program: Research and Evaluation—(Pub. L. 89-136, as Amended by Pub. L. 105-393, 42 U.S.C. 3147)

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance: 11.312 Research and Evaluation)

I: Measuring the Economic Impact of University Research Parks in the United States

EDA invites proposals to examine the impact of university research parks in creating jobs and growing regional economies.

Background: University research parks aim to create clusters of knowledge-based companies in close proximity to centers of research excellence. They are fast becoming engines of economic development in their communities. An increasing

amount of applied research and development work is taking place at universities, many of which cultivate an environment of innovation and entrepreneurship that develops and promotes commercial partnerships, creating higher skill and higher wage jobs. Commercialization efforts take time and require patience. For those who fund research parks, determining the extent and precise nature of their contribution to economic development is important. Research parks must demonstrate the benefits of what they are doing.

Scope of Work: The successful applicant will:

1. Demonstrate familiarity with existing research on U.S. university research parks and any gaps that remain in the research;

2. Survey university research parks to identify diverse settings, including those that contribute to distressed area economic development;

3. Develop a methodology to identify and measure the impact of university research parks, including such measures as diversification of the regional economy, the numbers and kinds of jobs created, the private sector investments leveraged, the length of time to achieve significant impact, and how they contribute to the economic health of distressed areas;

4. Identify effective university research parks and analyze common and unique areas where they have contributed to local economic development;

5. Select a number of case studies for detailed review and analysis;

6. Provide 500 hard copies and an electronic version of a final report setting forth the evaluation methodology, results, and related recommendations; and

7. Conduct up to seven presentations of the study findings, as described in section VII.B.

Timing: This project must be completed and the final report submitted within one year of approval of the project.

II: Providing Technical Assistance to Practitioners To Accelerate Transition to Technology-Led Economic Development Strategies

EDA invites proposals to prepare a set of guides to assist economic development practitioners in their efforts to accelerate regional transition to technology-led economies.

Background: "There are no low-tech industries, only low-tech firms." (Professor Michael E. Porter, Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness, Harvard Business School). Regardless of

the type of local and regional clusters, innovation through higher technological advancements results in increased productivity which leads to increased wealth. Economies that capitalize on innovation will prosper.

States and localities have been involved in technology-led economic development for a long time. Much of what has been learned from successful efforts remains largely word of mouth. Increasing communication and cooperation among practitioners will result in greater effectiveness and maximum impact. Preparing a set of guides that captures what has been learned from successful efforts would increase communication and cooperation among practitioners and the private sector to determine rules of the trade, measures of effectiveness, and techniques for maximizing impact. More detailed and useful than simple reports on best practices, each guide would focus on a specific element of developing technology-led strategies to help transform local and regional economies. Innovation in all industries through the development, adoption, and creative application of technology contributes significantly to economic growth. At the same time, competitors across the globe have relatively equal access to new technologies. Regions and localities must adopt technology-led strategies to become and remain competitive globally. EDA's intent is to capture and share the expertise and experience that will help America's distressed communities develop a competitive edge globally.

Scope of Work: The successful applicant will:

1. Have an extensive knowledge of and experience in technology-led economic development;

2. Be familiar with the issues and the best approaches to building technology-led economies;

3. Identify a small number of key elements that are critical to building a technology-based economy;

4. Prepare a set of guides that focus on specific elements through which economic development practitioners in distressed areas can tap into the wealth of experience and expertise of other practitioners in building a technology-based economy;

5. Provide 500 hard copies and electronic versions of each guide; and

6. Conduct up to seven presentations about the results of the research, as described in section VII.B.

Timing: This project must be completed within one year of approval of the project.