

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name(s):** Economic Development Administration (EDA), Department of Commerce
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** University Center Economic Development Program
- **Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):** 11.303, Economic Development – Technical Assistance
- **Dates:** Proposals must be received by 4:00 p.m. local time at the appropriate EDA regional office by February 21, 2006.
- **Teleconferences:** EDA’s Atlanta and Seattle regional offices will each hold a teleconference to answer questions about the FY 2006 competition for University Center funding.
Atlanta: The Atlanta regional office will hold its conference call on January 19, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. EST. In order to assure enough incoming lines are available, EDA requests colleges and universities planning to participate in the conference call to send an email to tpellegrino@eda.doc.gov with “Conference Call Registration” in the subject line no later than 2:00 p.m. EST on January 17, 2006. The number for the conference call is 1-800-988-0490. The pass code for this conference call is “46468.” The lead contact for the conference call is Tom Pellegrino.
Seattle: The Seattle regional office will hold its conference call on January 23, 2006 at 11:00 a.m. PST. In order to assure enough incoming lines are available, EDA requests colleges and universities planning to participate in the conference call to send an email to batkinson@eda.doc.gov with “Conference Call Registration” in the subject line no later than 2:00 p.m. PST on January 19, 2006. The number for the conference call is 1-800-857-7001. The pass code for this conference call is “12458.” The lead contact for the conference call is Bettye Atkinson.
- **Proposal Submission:** Paper submission to:
From proponents in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee:

University Center Program Competition
Economic Development Administration
Atlanta Regional Office
401 West Peachtree Street, N.W.
Suite 1820
Atlanta, Georgia 30308

From proponents in Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nevada, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Republic of Palau and Washington:

University Center Program Competition
Economic Development Administration
Seattle Regional Office
Federal Jackson Building, Room 1856
915 Second Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98174

NOTE: During FY 2006, EDA is soliciting proposals in separate competitions for University Center funding only in the areas served by these two EDA regional offices.

- **Funding Opportunity Description:** The mission of EDA is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. With funding from EDA, University Centers provide technical assistance to public and private sector organizations with the goal of enhancing local economic development.

EDA traditionally renewed an award to a University Center on an annual basis, as long as it maintained a satisfactory level of performance and Congress appropriated funds for the technical assistance programs authorized by the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3121 *et seq.*), as amended by the Economic Development Administration Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Pub. L. 108-373). Over a three-year period, EDA is phasing in competition for University Center funding.

- In FY 2004, EDA opened competition for University Center funding in EDA's Austin regional office (which serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas) and the Denver regional office (which serves Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming).
- In FY 2005, EDA opened competition for University Center funding in the Philadelphia regional office (which serves Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Virgin Islands and West Virginia) and the Chicago regional office (which serves Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin).
- In FY 2006, pursuant to this FFO, EDA is opening competition for University Center funding in the Atlanta and Seattle regional offices.

EDA does not anticipate creating or funding any additional new University Centers outside of the competitions held in FY 2004, FY 2005 and FY 2006, unless a University Center

withdraws from the program or does not perform to EDA's satisfaction. In such cases, the appropriate EDA regional office may choose to hold an intervening competition.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

EDA's mission is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. EDA fulfills its mission by helping our partners across the Nation create wealth and minimize poverty by promoting a favorable business environment to attract private capital investment and higher-skill, higher-wage jobs through world-class capacity-building, planning, infrastructure, research grants and strategic initiatives. Institutions of higher education have many assets, such as faculty, staff, libraries, laboratories, and computer systems, which can help to address local economic problems and opportunities. With funding from EDA, institutions of higher education establish and operate University Centers, which provide technical assistance to public and private sector organizations with the goal of enhancing local economic development.

B. Program Priorities

EDA encourages the submission of investment proposals that will significantly benefit areas with distressed economies. Distress may exist in a variety of forms, including but not limited to: high levels of unemployment, low income levels, large concentrations of low-income families, significant declines in per capita income, substantial loss of population because of the lack of employment opportunities, large numbers (or high rates) of business failures, sudden major layoffs or plant closures, military base closures, natural or other major disasters, depletion of natural resources or reduced tax bases.

EDA believes that local economic development occurs primarily through investments and decisions made by the private sector. EDA will give preference to proposals that focus on fostering higher-skill, higher-wage jobs and attracting private capital investment to the economic region served by the proposed University Center. Programs not focused on economic development activities that foster higher-skill, higher-wage job creation and private sector investments are encouraged to seek financial support from other sources.

EDA will also consider proposals for University Center funding that focus on research that fulfills a unique niche that is highly valued by local, regional or national, public or private economic development entities.

EDA will not fund University Centers that operate in isolation from other resources at the institution of higher education receiving the award. A University-affiliated research foundation is eligible to submit a proposal so long as it demonstrates conclusively and with documentary support (e.g., a letter or other documentation from a University President or Chancellor) that it maintains the full and integral support of the University for its economic development activities.

C. Program Authority

The authority for the University Center Program is the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3121 *et seq.*), as amended by the Economic Development Administration Reauthorization Act of 2004 (2004 Act, Pub. L. 108-373) (PWEDA). On August 11, 2005, EDA published an interim final rule to reflect the amendments made to EDA's authorizing statute by the 2004 Act (70 FR 47002). The interim final rule became effective on October 1, 2005. You may access the interim final rule and PWEDA on EDA's Internet website at www.eda.gov.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Funding appropriated under the FY 2006 Science, State, Justice, Commerce and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (Pub. L. 109-108) is available for technical assistance programs authorized by PWEDA. Funds in the amount of \$8,215,711 have been appropriated for FY 2006 and shall remain available until expended.

EDA expects to allocate approximately \$6,839,529 to the University Center Program and the remaining appropriated funds to EDA's Local and National Technical Assistance Programs. The amount of University Center funding available for competition in FY 2006 is expected to be approximately \$1,426,223 in the Atlanta regional office and approximately \$1,324,444 in the Seattle regional office. Anticipated annual awards for University Centers under the FY 2006 competition are in the \$125,000 to \$150,000 range in the Atlanta regional office, and in the \$100,000 to \$215,000 range in the Seattle regional office. Regional offices may, however, choose to fund proposals under this competition outside these ranges. The remaining FY 2006 program funds will be used to continue support for current University Centers. Subject to the availability of funding, the funds made available under the University Center Program are anticipated to be available until expended.

B. Project Award Period

In its FY 2000 Notice of Funding Availability, EDA designated the University Center Program as a multi-year program. In FY 2004, EDA began to implement this multi-year concept, and announced its intent to begin administering the University Center Program as a competitive multi-year program beginning that fiscal year. *See* Subpart B of part 306 of the interim final rule. For the awards made under the competition anticipated under this announcement, the period of time required to complete the project scope of work will be three years.

Under this multi-year program designation, EDA will approve a three-year project period for each University Center selected for funding under the competition initiated in FY 2006. An EDA regional office may fully fund a selected proposal for the full three-year period, or, alternatively, may provide funding year-to-year. If the year-to-year funding option is utilized, the University Center will not have to compete for the second and third year of funding. Funding beyond the initial year would be dependent upon the availability of funds and satisfactory performance, as determined by EDA and expressed in written notice. The decision of whether to fully fund a three-year award or provide funding on a year-to-year basis will be made by the regional office at the time the award is made. However, it is anticipated that most regional offices will provide funding on a year-to-year basis under this competition.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Under this solicitation, EDA will fund University Centers with grants for a three-year project award period. As noted earlier, however, funding may be provided on an annual basis.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

For the University Center Program, EDA considers all accredited institutions of higher education as eligible applicants. As noted earlier, a University-affiliated research foundation is eligible to submit a proposal so long as it demonstrates conclusively and with documentary support (e.g., a letter or other documentation from a University President or Chancellor) that it maintains the full and integral support of the University for its economic development activities.

For FY 2006, the University Center competition is open to eligible applicants in areas served by EDA's Atlanta and Seattle regional offices. The Atlanta regional office serves Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. The Seattle regional office serves Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nevada, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Republic of Palau and Washington.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Share Requirement

Generally, the amount of the EDA grant may not exceed fifty (50) percent of the total cost of the project. Projects may receive an additional amount that shall not exceed thirty (30) percent, based on the relative needs of the region in which the project will be located, as determined by EDA. *See* Section 204(a) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. 3144) and Section 301.4(b)(1) of the interim final rule. For projects of a national scope under part 306 of the interim final rule (Training, Research and Technical Assistance), and for all other projects under part 306 of the interim final rule, after the application of the first two (2) sentences of this paragraph, the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development has the discretion to establish a maximum EDA investment rate of up to one-hundred (100) percent where the project (i) merits and is not otherwise feasible without an increase to the EDA investment rate; or (ii) will be of no or only incidental benefit to the recipient. *See* Section 204(c)(3) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. 3144)

and Section 301.4(b)(4) of the interim final rule. Potential applicants should contact the appropriate EDA regional office to make this determination.

While cash contributions are preferred, in-kind contributions, fairly evaluated by EDA, may include assumptions of debt and contributions of space, equipment, and services and may provide the non-Federal share of the total project cost. *See* Section 204(b) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. 3144). In-kind contributions must be eligible project costs and meet applicable Federal cost principles and uniform administrative requirements. Funds from other Federal financial assistance awards are not considered matching share funds. In the proposal review process, EDA will consider the nature of the contribution (cash or in-kind) and the amount of the matching share funds. Cash contributions are preferred.

IV. Proposal and Submission Information

A. Addresses to Request Proposal Package

Proposal packages consist of the first page of the Form ED-900P “Pre-Application for Financial Assistance” (OMB Control No. 0610-0094) and a proposal narrative. This form is available on EDA’s Internet website at www.eda.gov. Paper pre-applications are also available:

For proponents in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee, from:

University Center Program Competition
Economic Development Administration
Atlanta Regional Office
401 West Peachtree Street, N.W.
Suite 1820
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
Telephone: (404) 730-3002

For proponents in Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nevada, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Republic of Palau and Washington, from:

University Center Program Competition
Economic Development Administration
Seattle Regional Office
Federal Jackson Building, Room 1856
915 Second Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98174
Telephone: (206) 220-7660

B. Content and Form of Proposal Submission

In addition to the first page of the ED-900P, interested organizations must submit the proposal narrative referred to on page three of the ED-900P, limited to a maximum of fifteen (15) pages, including any and all attachments and supporting documentation, in the following format (proponents are not required to use the ED-900P narrative format or provide additional information as requested in the ED-900P):

Section 1. Program Focus of the Proposed University Center

- a. Identify the program focus of the University Center (for example, providing technical assistance or conducting applied research).
- b. If the University Center will have more than one focus, indicate the anticipated percentage of each focus.

Section 2. Service Area, Needs of Service Area and Target Audience of the Proposed University Center

- a. Define the proposed geographic service area of the University Center.
- b. Present the economic development needs, issues and opportunities of the proposed service area.
- c. Identify the target audience of the proposed University Center, especially the economically distressed parts of the service area.

Section 3. Scope of Work and Anticipated Impacts and Benefits

- a. Outline the scope of work to be undertaken by the proposed University Center. This section must be organized in three elements: (i) providing technical assistance; (ii) conducting applied research; and (iii) disseminating results of the activities of the University Center. For this program, providing technical assistance includes all economic development activities undertaken at the request of an entity outside the sponsoring institution. Conducting applied research means the direct use of research to assist in client-based decision-making. Disseminating results of the activities of the University Center includes efforts undertaken to inform the University Center's target audience of its assistance and preparing semi-annual and annual narrative reports to be provided to EDA. Only a small percentage of the scope of work should be devoted to disseminating results of the activities of the University Center.
- b. Identify the anticipated impacts and benefits of the proposed University Center. EDA is particularly interested in estimates of: (i) private sector jobs that will be created and funds that will be invested as a result of the activities of the University Center; (ii) the percentage of University Center clients initiating action as a result of the assistance provided by the University Center; and (iii) the percentage of those clients who achieve the anticipated results.

Section 4. Supporting Information

- a. Discuss the institution's capacity and experience in operating technical assistance programs, especially those focused on economic development.
- b. Identify other organizations in the proposed service area that provide potentially complementary or duplicative services.
- c. Outline the process or strategy the proposed University Center will follow to maximize coordination with relevant entities to minimize duplication of services.
- d. Outline the process or strategy for coordinating and accessing key resources of the sponsoring institution to support economic development efforts.
- e. Provide evidence of strong support (both financial and non-financial) from the leadership of the sponsoring institution for the University Center and its activities.
- f. Present a project budget, including a breakdown by the Federal share and the non-Federal share, for each of the three years and identify the sources of the non-Federal funding. (Note: At least 80 percent of EDA funding must be allocated to direct costs of program delivery.)

Section 5. University Center-Specific Investment Policy Guidelines

- a. Proponents must submit responses to the five (5) University Center-specific investment policy guidelines listed in Part V.A. of this announcement. Each proponent's responses should be limited to two (2) pages in length and placed in a separate document from the proposal narrative discussing Sections 1-4 above.
- b. Proponents also should submit responses to the five (5) University Center-specific investment policy guidelines in electronic format (Microsoft Word document).

Current University Centers in the service areas of the Austin, Chicago, Denver and Philadelphia regional offices will not have to compete for continuation funding in FY 2006. Each of these University Centers must, however, submit a narrative statement, in the format outlined in this section, as part of its application for continuation funding in FY 2006. The appropriate EDA regional office will contact each current University Center and notify it of the procedures for obtaining FY 2006 continuation funding.

C. Electronic Submission

EDA is not currently able to accept electronic submissions of proposal packages.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals submitted under this competition must be received by the Atlanta or Seattle regional office by February 21, 2006 at 4:00 p.m. local time. Proposals received after that time will not be considered for funding. EDA will determine when a proposal package has been submitted by date and time stamping each proposal package when it is physically received in the EDA regional office. Proponents are advised that mail security measures may delay receipt of United States Postal Service mail for up to two weeks. Proponents may wish to use a guaranteed overnight delivery service.

E. Teleconferences

EDA's Atlanta and Seattle regional offices will each hold a teleconference on January 19, 2006 and January 23, 2006, respectively, to answer questions about the FY 2006 competition for University Center funding. These teleconferences also will provide information regarding preparing proposals. EDA will not provide assistance to proponents outside these scheduled teleconferences. *See* the Executive Summary for further details.

F. Intergovernmental Review

EDA applications for funding are subject to the requirements of Executive Order (EO) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." To find out more about a State's process under EO 12372, applicants may contact their State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC). Names and addresses of some States' SPOCs are listed on the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) home page at www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html.

G. Funding Restrictions

1. Direct Cost Requirement

At least eighty (80) percent of EDA funding must be allocated to direct costs of program delivery.

2. Allowable Costs

Allowable costs are determined by reference to OMB Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions." *See* www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a021/a21_2004.html. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, supplies and other expenses that are reasonable and necessary for the completion of the scope of work.

H. Other Submission Requirements

Proposal packages under this competition must be submitted to the Atlanta or Seattle regional offices at the addresses listed in Part IV.A. Facsimile transmissions of proposal packages will not be accepted.

V. Proposal Review Information

A. Criteria

The following University Center-specific investment policy guidelines have been adapted from the investment policy guidelines set forth in Section 301.8 of the interim final rule. EDA investments in proposed University Centers will be competitively rated and ranked on their ability to satisfy one or more of these University Center-specific investment policy guidelines (each criterion will be given equivalent weight).

1. ***Be market-based and results driven.*** An investment in a University Center will capitalize on the university's competitive strengths and will bolster regional economic competitiveness, resulting in tangible, quantifiable improvements in regional economic health, such as increased numbers of higher-skill, higher-wage jobs, increased tax revenue or increased private sector investment.
2. ***Have strong organizational leadership.*** An investment will have strong leadership, relevant project management experience, and a significant commitment of human resources talent to ensure a high-performing University Center. Specifically for University Center investments, this includes: (a) the extent to which the proposed University Center will maximize coordination with other relevant organizations and avoid duplication of services offered by other organizations; (b) the extent to which the proposed University Center will access, take advantage of, and be supported by other resources present at the sponsoring institution, especially the institution's economic development activities; and (c) the degree of evidence demonstrating the support and commitment (both financial and non-financial) of the highest management levels of the proposed University Center's sponsoring institution.
3. ***Advance productivity, innovation and entrepreneurship.*** An investment in a proposed University Center will embrace the principles of entrepreneurship, enhance regional industry clusters, and leverage and link technology innovators (university research) with the private sector to create the conditions for greater productivity, innovation and higher-skill, higher-wage job creation.
4. ***Look beyond the immediate economic horizon, anticipate economic changes, and diversify the local and regional economy.*** A University Center's activities will be part of an overarching, long-term comprehensive economic development strategy that enhances a region's success in achieving a rising standard of living.
5. ***Demonstrate a high degree of local commitment by exhibiting:***
 - High levels of local government or non-profit matching funds and private sector leverage;
 - Clear and unified leadership and support by local elected officials; and
 - Strong cooperation among the business sector, relevant regional partners and local, State and Federal governments.

Proponents must provide responses to these five (5) University Center-specific investment policy guidelines in addition to the proposal submission information listed in Sections 1-4 of Part IV.B. See Section 5 of Part IV.B. of this announcement for specific instructions.

In making its recommendations on which institutions should be invited to submit a full application, the EDA review team will strive to avoid the concentration of program funding in a single or very limited number of geographic areas. For this reason, EDA cannot predict a minimum ranking of a successful proposal.

B. Review and Selection Process

1. Initial Evaluation and Technical Review of the Proposals

EDA's Atlanta and Seattle regional offices will conduct an initial administrative and technical review of each proposal package to determine its completeness and compliance with the requirements.

2. Review Panel

EDA's Atlanta and Seattle regional offices will conduct an internal review of each proposal meeting the requirements of this solicitation. This review will be conducted by a minimum of three EDA staff using the criteria provided in Part V.A. Successful proponents under this competition solicitation will be invited to submit a complete application by the Atlanta or Seattle regional office.

C. Selection Factors

EDA expects to fund the highest ranking proposals submitted under this competition solicitation. However, EDA may select proposals out of order for several reasons, including:

1. Availability of funding;
2. Geographic balance in distribution of funds;
3. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in Parts I.B. and III.B.; or
4. Applicant's performance under previous awards.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funding, it is anticipated that award start dates under this competition will begin on or after July 1, 2006.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful proponents under the competition solicitation will receive a written invitation to submit a complete application by the Atlanta or Seattle regional office. This invitation is not, however, a guarantee that funding will be provided. Unsuccessful proponents will be notified in writing that their proposal was not recommended for funding. Unsuccessful proposals will be retained in the EDA regional office for one year, after which they will be destroyed.

The notice of award (Form CD-450) is signed by the EDA Grants Officer and is the authorizing grant award document. EDA will send it by postal mail to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements, published in the Federal Register on December 30, 2004 (69 FR

78389). This notice may be accessed by entering the Federal Register volumes and page numbers provided in the previous sentence at the following Internet web site:
<http://gpoaccess.gov/fr/retrieve.html>.

C. Reporting

All recipients are required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. All financial reports must be submitted in triplicate (one original and two copies) to the EDA Program Officer. Reports are due on a semi-annual schedule and must be submitted no later than thirty (30) days following the end of the six-month period from the start date of the award. Final reports are due ninety (90) days after the award expiration. *See* Section 302.16 of the interim final rule.

VII. Agency Contact(s)

EDA's Internet web site at www.eda.gov contains additional information on EDA and its programs. You may also contact EDA's Atlanta and Seattle regional offices at the addresses and telephone numbers provided in Part IV.A.

VIII. Other Information

EDA's public comment period for the interim final rule ran from August 11, 2005 to November 14, 2005. EDA will consider and respond to comments received during the public comment period and will make additional revisions to the August 11, 2005 interim final rule in publishing a final rule during 2006. On December 15, 2005, EDA published an interim final rule (70 FR 74193; 70 FR 74196) to effect only those changes to the August 11, 2005 interim final rule specified in the Conference Report accompanying the FY 2006 Science, State, Justice, Commerce and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (Pub. L. 109-108).