

Fact Sheet: Federal Assistance for Round II Non-Designated Communities

The application process for Round II Empowerment Zone designation was highly competitive. The Department of Agriculture received 160 applications representing communities in 38 States and the Department of Housing and Urban Development received 118 applications representing communities in 44 States and the District of Columbia. The reviews were conducted by an inter-departmental team of specialists. They examined the comprehensiveness of the strategic plans, the extent of citizen participation in the planning and implementation process, and the strength of the commitments by local organizations to follow through during implementation.

The leadership and the efforts that the communities put into developing their applications involved many dedicated people at the grass-roots who worked long and hard to shape plans that would help to revitalize their communities. The Clinton-Gore Administration, recognizing that it is a major achievement for a community to come together, join forces and create a comprehensive plan that would help build a stronger community with new jobs and new opportunities for those people who live and work there is proposing to provide assistance to the communities who applied but were not designated as a Round II Empowerment Zone. The assistance proposed will allow these communities to still benefit from the work represented in their strategic plans.

The partnerships between residents, government and the private sector that were created or enhanced by the communities during this application process and the public and private sector financial commitments that were made to revitalize their communities, are valuable products of this process which should be pursued regardless of an Empowerment Zone designation. The Clinton-Gore Administration is offering the following assistance to help these non-designated communities implement their strategic plans.

Communities that applied for designation as an Urban Empowerment Zone:

- The President's FY 2000 Budget will contain a request to provide HUD with \$45 million (\$3 million per community) that will be made available to the top 15 communities, which will be designated as Strategic Planning Communities. These communities were not designated as Round II Empowerment Zones but finished the competition as one of the 30 finalists. The funds provided by HUD can be used to assist the Strategic Planning Communities in furthering the implementation of their strategic plans.
- The President's FY 2000 Budget will contain a request to provide HUD with \$10 million in small grants that will be made available to non-designated applicants. These grants will help to maintain the momentum of communities implementing their strategic plans.
- The President's FY 2000 Budget will also contain a request to provide HUD with \$10 million will also be made available to selected non-designated communities to provide technical assistance to help with the implementation of their plans.

- HUD will appoint an "EZ Facilitator" to work with the community to identify and help you access Federal funding opportunities to assist in the implementation of your strategic plan;
- The EZ Facilitator will work with the community to identify technical assistance opportunities that will assist in implementing your strategic plan. Professional expertise and peer-to-peer mentoring will be made available for local capacity building, economic development, workforce development, job creation, affordable housing, environmental remediation and redevelopment, small business development and other areas that will help implement your strategic plan.
- Each member Federal agency of the President's Community Empowerment Board, chaired by Vice President Gore, will identify resources that they can make available to assist the non-designated communities. The Board will work as a clearinghouse to connect each EZ Facilitator and your community to the appropriate Federal agency and assist in identifying grant resources and technical assistance.
- The EZ Facilitator will coordinate with the leadership of the non-designated community to convene meetings locally, regionally and nationally to ensure a tailored federal response to its strategic plan.
- The community will also be included in the distribution of all EZ/EC Initiative materials which help to identify federal funding opportunities including the comprehensive Federal Program Guide, the EZ/EC Newsletter, the EZ/EC Website, flash faxes and satellite broadcasts.

Communities that applied for designation as Rural Empowerment Zones:

- USDA will designate the community as a "Champion Community."
- The President's FY 2000 Budget Request will contain a request to provide USDA with \$5 million to assist Champion Communities in the implementation of their strategic plans.
- As a Champion Community, the community will receive expedited consideration and extra selection points for USDA Rural Development programs which support community development in a wide range of areas, including business development, essential community facilities, housing, drinking water and waste disposal systems.
- The community will be contacted by a staff person from the USDA Office of Community Development and by the State Rural Development Office who will be available to provide you and your community with more information about USDA assistance and other Federal agency assistance that may be available for the community to assist in implementing its strategic plan.
- Each member Federal agency of the President's Community Empowerment Board, chaired by Vice President Gore, will identify resources that they can make available to assist the non-designated community. The Board will work as a clearinghouse to connect the State Rural Development Director and the community to the appropriate Federal agency and assist in identifying grant resources and technical assistance.

- The USDA State Rural Development Director for that community will also coordinate with the leadership of the community to convene meetings locally, regionally and nationally to ensure a tailored federal response to your strategic plan.
- The community will also be included in the distribution of all EZ/EC Initiative materials which help to identify federal funding opportunities including the comprehensive Federal Program Guide, the EZ/EC Newsletter, the EZ/EC Website, flash faxes and satellite broadcasts.