

F. MDA – Essential New York Initiative (W679)

March 26, 2010

Grantee: Metropolitan Development Association of Syracuse and Central New York, Inc. (“MDA”)

ESD Investment: A grant of up to \$600,000 to be used for costs associated with the implementation of Essential New York Initiative (the “Initiative”) programs and projects.

Project Location: 109 South Warren Street, Syracuse, Onondaga County

NYS Empire Zone (or equivalent): N/A

Project Completion: December 31, 2011

Grantee Contact: Robert Simpson, President and CEO
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Project Team: Project Management Meg Paskins
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Project Description:

Background

The MDA, established in 1959, is a private, not-for-profit corporation representing the business leadership of the central upstate New York region (the “Region”). It carries out a number of functions and activities as determined by its board of directors, including economic development, downtown and neighborhood redevelopment, regional strategic planning, and real estate management.

Working with two national consulting firms, Battelle Memorial Institute in Cleveland, Ohio and Catalytix, Inc. in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 2003 the MDA developed a comprehensive strategy for the twelve-county Region. This strategy, the Essential New York Initiative, provides the framework for all of the MDA’s work.

Two of the core strategies of the Initiative involve: **Cluster Development** - targeted to stimulating job growth and improving business competitiveness in key industries that offer a regional competitive advantage, including environmental systems, financial services, biomedical, advanced manufacturing, and agri-services/food processing; and **Talent** – targeted to attracting, retaining and engaging the best and the brightest, especially in the under-35 population.

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The \$600,000 grant will be used to address opportunities and challenges in each of these two strategies. The funds will go toward a number of projects and programs including Project ION, an internship program which has provided over 2,000 opportunities for college students to experience a paid internship with a regional business; implementing a Downtown Ambassador Program; and further strengthening neighborhood workforce development programs.

To date, ESD has approved \$4.946 million in funding (all legislative-sponsored grants) for the Initiative: \$2 million for the capitalization and implementation of the Grants for Growth Program, which helps seed meaningful applied research projects between universities and industry that have the potential to create jobs and develop or commercialize new technology. Thirty-one awards have been announced totaling approximately \$1,627,260; \$2 million to implement projects and programs associated with the Initiative's core strategies and for staffing and administration costs associated with implementing these efforts; \$600,000 for costs associated with the implementation of a regional business development effort focused on the environmental and energy systems industry sectors; and \$301,000 to further implement the Creative Core branding initiative which was designed to establish a recognizable identity for the Region, centered on the theme of creativity, innovation and lifestyle. In addition, the Directors approved a \$45,000 grant to the MDA to be used for Web site maintenance, portal content development and direct marketing costs to support the Creative Core Web portal.

The Project

The MDA will use project funding for programs and projects in the two core strategies mentioned above. **Cluster Development** efforts will be primarily directed at targeted industry attraction focused on companies and sectors with a high probability to locate in urban and center city locations such as financial services and customer support. **Talent** efforts will focus on Project ION, a Downtown Ambassador Program and neighborhood workforce development programs.

Internships have proven to be the single best way for students to become better engaged with a region. The MDA will seek to expand the benefits of Project ION beyond college students to include high schoolers, mature workers, career changers, and neighborhood workforce development program clients. The Downtown Ambassador Program will serve as both a welcoming presence in downtown Syracuse and as an added deterrent to crime.

Ambassadors will be trained to provide directions and maps, administer first aid, radio police, and provide light litter control. The MDA will work with regional organizations to identify appropriate individuals and provide job training in this field.

Existing neighborhood workforce development programs (Huntington Family Center and Northside Collaborative Ministries) have already laid the foundation for real economic empowerment and renewal in two of Syracuse's poorest neighborhoods. The programs provide a full complement of job readiness, job training and job placement services and partner with companies that are predisposed to cultivating the skill of a non-traditional

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workforce and work with candidates to place them in appropriate employment opportunities. The MDA will use part of the grant funding to continue the two existing programs and establish a new site on either the east or south side of Syracuse.

Upon completion of the project, the Grantee will furnish a final report describing the impact and effectiveness of the project.

Financing Uses	Amount	Financing Sources	Amount	Percent
Neighborhood Workforce Development Programs	\$100,000	ESD Grant	\$600,000	100%
Project ION	75,000			
Cluster Development	85,000			
Downtown Ambassador Program	150,000			
Staffing *	171,000			
Administration Costs **	19,000			
Total Project Costs	\$600,000	Total Project Financing	\$600,000	100%

* Staffing costs are for a one-year period – MDA will secure another funding source for Year 2

** Includes costs for rent, legal/accounting, travel, meetings and conferences, and telephone.

Statutory Basis – Community Projects Fund:

The project was authorized in the 2009-2010 New York State budget. No residential relocation is required as there are no families or individuals residing on the site.

Disclosure and Accountability Certifications:

The Grantee has provided ESDC with the required Disclosure and Accountability Certifications. Grantee’s certifications indicate that Grantee has no conflict of interest or good standing violations and, therefore, staff recommends that the Corporation authorize the grant to the Grantee as described in these materials.