

G. MDA – Essential New York Initiative – Regional Marketing (W332)

October 22, 2009

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

Beneficiary

Organization: Central Upstate Regional Alliance, Inc. (“CURA”)

ESD Investment: A grant of up to \$301,000 to be used for regional marketing costs associated with the New York Creative Core branding initiative.

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

NYS Empire Zone (or equivalent): N/A

Project Completion: June 2011

Grantee Contact: Robert Simpson, President and CEO
109 South Warren Street, Suite 1900
Syracuse, New York 13202
Phone: 315-422-8284 Fax: 315-422-8284

Beneficiary Contact: Thomas Blanchard, Deputy Director
109 South Warren Street, Suite 1900
Syracuse, New York 13202
Phone: 315-422-8284 Fax: 315-471-4503

Project Team:

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Project Management | Meg Paskins |
| Affirmative Action | Helen Daniels |
| Environmental | Soo Kang |

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, the MDA developed a comprehensive strategy for the twelve-county Region in 2003. This strategy, the Essential New York Initiative (the “Initiative”), provides the framework for all of the MDA’s work. One of the outcomes of the Initiative was the creation of CURA to establish a recognizable identity for

MDA – Essential New York Initiative – Regional Marketing (W332)

October 22, 2009

the Region, address opportunities and issues of mutual concern and cooperatively identify and pursue economic development and marketing projects that would benefit the Region.

Since its inception in 2004, CURA has focused its efforts on implementing three projects: **Project ION** – a program to effectively connect students at the Region’s thirty-five colleges and universities with internship opportunities across the area, which to date has led to 1,800 internships, resulting in significant full-time employment for graduating students, addressing in part, the issue of “brain-drain” within the Region; **Essential Connections** - an online marketplace targeted for use by the Region’s technology-based industries to encourage regional collaboration and innovation; and **Emerging Business Competition** – launched in 2007 to stimulate the entrepreneurial economy in the Region by offering a \$100,000 investment to the Region’s most innovative and growth-oriented business.

The success of these projects led to the creation of a regional branding initiative, the New York Creative Core (“Creative Core”), designed to establish a recognizable identity for the Region, centered on the themes of creativity, innovation and lifestyle. The branding initiative has been targeted to both people attraction, particularly the forty and below age demographic and young entrepreneurs, and economic development attraction, focusing on emerging technology sectors such as renewable energy and environmental systems. The Creative Core brand has already been incorporated into the individual marketing efforts of over 150 partner organizations within the Region.

This highly visible regional effort has been met with tremendous interest and is gaining increased attention and utilization. The MDA, along with CURA, propose to build on this early success and implement an aggressive and comprehensive multi-year effort to utilize the branding initiative to promote and market the Region’s assets to defined internal and external audiences for the purposes of business and talent development and retention and attraction, in a way that complements existing community-based efforts.

To date, ESD has approved \$4.6 million in funding 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. Twenty-one awards have been announced totaling approximately \$850,000; \$2 million to implement projects and programs associated with the Initiative’s six core strategies and for staffing and administration costs associated with implementing these efforts; and \$600,000 to be used for costs associated with the implementation of a regional business development effort focused on the environmental and energy systems industry sectors. 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.

MDA – Essential New York Initiative – Regional Marketing (W332)
 October 22, 2009

The Project

Working together, the MDA and CURA will use project funding to further implement the Creative Core branding initiative by: 1) developing and marketing a comprehensive regional marketing Web portal by unifying/merging various business Web portals under www.creativecore.com, developing a HTML logo for embedding on individual or organization Web sites to drive traffic to the Web portal and developing a content library management system for regional partners; 2) enlisting additional partners by holding regional partner workshops, delivering member benefits to partners via a Web log-in and strategically placing “join” buttons throughout the Web portal; 3) influencing public opinion by developing uniform messages for companies to place at the end of radio/television advertisements and installing high-visibility impressions such as outdoor advertising; 4) effectively delivering the brand message in print by securing low-to-no cost advertising space in regional print outlets, delivering written content to college and university alumni relation offices for distribution in print collateral and developing a list of priority print media targets; 5) maximizing earned media opportunities by hiring a marketing director, inviting members of the media to all Creative Core events and ensuring placement of Creative Core collateral at all major regional media events involving Creative Core partners and public officials; and 6) generating leads and tracking follow-through of inquiries by placing strategic advertisements in targeted trade and industry print outlets, developing a list of priority trade shows and participating in such events, implementing a software database for effective tracking and communications with potential leads, and developing a lead generation protocol for use with regional partners.

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 |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Staffing | \$200,000 | ESD Grant | \$301,000 | 100% |
| Creative Services | 25,000 | | | |
| Media Purchases | 25,000 | | | |
| Web Administration | 15,000 | | | |
| Office/Administration Expenses ** | 36,000 | | | |
| | | | | |
| Total Project Costs | \$301,000 | Total Project Financing | \$301,000 | 100% |

* Covers a thirty-month period.

** Includes costs for legal, accounting, printing and mailing, travel and meetings, and overhead.

Statutory Basis – Local Assistance:

The project was authorized in the 2008-2009 New York State budget and was reappropriated in the 2009-2010 New York State budget. No residential relocation is required as there are no families or individuals residing on the site.

MDA – Essential New York Initiative – Regional Marketing (W332)
October 22, 2009

Disclosure and Accountability Certifications:

The Grantee and Beneficiary Organization have provided ESDC with the required Disclosure and Accountability Certifications. Grantee's and Beneficiary Organization's certifications indicate that Grantee and Beneficiary Organization have no good standing violations.

The Grantee and Beneficiary Organization disclosed the following information:

- The MDA provides CURA with in-kind office overhead and supply contributions.
- The MDA currently pays one-half of the salary of CURA's Marketing Director, as well as one other staff member employed by the MDA but whose time is also allocated to CURA. Beginning January 2010, other funding sources will be used.

This disclosure does not indicate that the Grantee or Beneficiary Organization has any current conflict of interest violations, and therefore, staff recommends that the Corporation authorize the grant to the Grantee as described in these materials.