



# Board Agenda Item 52

DATE: March 28, 2023

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Steven E. White, Director  
Department of Public Works and Planning

SUBJECT: Economic Development Administration Grant Application

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Approve and authorize the Department of Public Works and Planning to submit a grant application to the U.S. Economic Development Administration for up to \$150,000 to partially fund preparation of a new digitally integrated Fresno County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.**
- 2. If the grant application is awarded, authorize the Director of the Department of Public Works and Planning, subject to review and approval by County Counsel as to legal form and the Auditor-Controller/Treasure-Tax Collector as to accounting form, to execute grant agreement, related documents, and any amendments thereto, necessary for participation in the U.S. Economic Development Administration Grant Program.**

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) Planning and Local Technical Assistance Program has issued an ongoing Notice of Funding to award funds to strengthen the capacity of Local or State Organizations to promote economic development. The County is eligible to apply for up to \$150,000. If awarded, the EDA grant funds will be used in combination with funds (\$150,000) previously allocated by your Board to the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to update the County's Comprehensive Development Strategy (CEDS).

General Plan Policy ED-A.4 directs the County to maintain, monitor, and periodically update the County's CEDS, which is used as an operational guide to implement the County's economic development goals, policies, and programs of the General Plan, as well as fulfilling the EDA's CEDS requirements for federal grant funding eligibility. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Your Board may choose to decline the recommended action. If this occurs, the Department will continue to seek grant funding opportunities.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. If awarded, EDA funding will be used in combination with the \$150,000 previously allocated on September 7, 2021, and on September 6, 2022, in the County's annual contract with EDC to initiate preparation of the CEDS update. The EDA grant funds will be combined with these previously allocated funds in order to complete the CEDS. If funds received are insufficient to complete the CEDS, the County will explore other funding options, including

requesting financial contributions from the 14 cities in Fresno County.

DISCUSSION:

EDA makes planning and local technical assistance investments to support economic development, foster job creation, and attract private investment in economically distressed areas of the United States. Under the planning program, EDA makes awards to eligible recipients to create and implement regional economic development plans designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region.

EDC is contracted on a yearly basis to conduct various economic development activities outlined in the Economic Development Element of the Fresno County General Plan. The EDC's most recent contracts include updating the County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The award of this grant will allow the County to create a new digitally integrated CEDS. The CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development designed to build capacity and guide economic prosperity and resilience of an area or region. Fresno County General Plan Policy ED-A.4 requires the CEDS to fulfill the Federal requirement set by the U.S. Economic Development Administration for Federal grant fund eligibility. The CEDS must include a summary background of the economic conditions of the region and an in-depth analysis of regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The CEDS must also include a strategic direction that should build on findings from the analysis and develop an evaluation framework to evaluate the organization's implementation of the CEDS and its impact on the regional economy.

Development of the digitally-integrated CEDS will include a process for residents, organizations, local governments, institutes of learning, and private industry to engage in a meaningful conversation and debate about what capacity-building efforts which would best serve economic development in Fresno County. The new digitally-integrated CEDS should consider and, where appropriate, integrate or leverage other regional planning efforts, including the use of other available federal funds, private sector resources, and state support which can advance a region's CEDS goals and objectives.

The CEDS is a strategic document required to receive funding from some EDA programs at the city and county levels. Additionally, this document will likely be supportive of applications from other state and Federal funding sources. Given the unprecedented investment into the region, in large part from the EDA, staff believe it is advantageous to seek grant funding from EDA to supplement the next 5-year CEDS to include additional components:

- Integrating EDA-funded projects and plans such as the Good Jobs Challenge and Build Back Better Challenge, among others.
- Identifying key projects and funding needs in alignment with the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) and Science Act of 2022, Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, and Inflation Reduction Act, among others.
- Conducting meaningful community and industry stakeholder engagement, including translation and supportive services where allowable by the grant, to create the new 5-year CEDS.
- Creating a new digitally integrated CEDS platform accessible to the public and partnering agencies.

The Fresno County CEDS was last adopted in May 2017. In 2021, the EDC initiated planning efforts for a new digitally integrated CEDS, including several discussions with prospective consultants, partners, and EDA representatives. It is estimated that the cost to prepare a digitally integrated CEDS for Fresno County's population, except for the City of Fresno, which is preparing its own, ranged from \$200,000 to \$300,000.

The Department of Public Works and Planning will administer the grant with assistance from EDC. EDC, under contract with the County, will take the lead in developing the CEDS, with Department staff coordinating with EDC throughout the development.

The grant funds will be utilized by the Department of Public Works and Planning to retain a consultant to

prepare the CEDS. EDC will take the lead in providing oversight of the County's consultant and overseeing completion of the CEDS, with staff support from the Department of Public Works and Planning. The Department will return to your Board with an Agreement for consultant services.

OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES:

Economic Development Corporation Serving Fresno County

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #25, September 6, 2022

BAI #32, September 7, 2021

BAI #10, May 2, 2017

CAO ANALYST:

Salvador Espino