

June 7, 2001

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed you will find the grant application and instructions for the Toolkit for Economic Development program. The program was created by the Legislature in 2000 in an effort to coordinate the various economic development programs currently administered by different agencies.

The law designates four state entities to administer the Toolkit program. Those four entities—the Toolkit Coordinating Partners—include the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Enterprise Florida, Inc., the Governor's Office of Urban Opportunity, and Workforce Florida, Inc. Officials from those four agencies have implemented the Toolkit program to date and will continue to oversee the program through the grant application process.

The Toolkit program has federal funds available from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. This means that Toolkit projects must serve populations eligible for TANF monies. The grant application explains authorized TANF activities in detail. Toolkit grants will be awarded on a competitive basis.

In fiscal year (FY) 2000-01, the Legislature authorized \$25 million in TANF funds for Toolkit projects. If you have a project already in the development stage, that project may be eligible for funding in the first round of Toolkit projects.

If you elect to apply in the **first round**, your project must be ready for immediate implementation and you must complete the project by December 31, 2001. The deadline for Toolkit applications for the first round of funding is **4 p.m., Friday, June 22, 2001**. The application materials explain how to apply and where to submit the completed application. The Coordinating Partners expect to release funds from the first round of applications by late July 2001.

In FY 2001-02, the Legislature authorized \$10 million in TANF funds. Completed Toolkit applications for the **second round** of funding are **due by 4 p.m., July 27, 2001**. A project funded in the second round of Toolkit applications must be fully implemented by June 30, 2002. Future Toolkit projects will be subject to legislative review and future appropriations. Awards for the second round of Toolkit applications will be made by late August 2001.

The Toolkit law requires the Coordinating Partners to select 15 communities to compete in the program. Seven of the 15 communities must be from the largest counties in the state. The law requires the partners to designate 3 rural communities, and five communities in other counties in the state. Similarly, the Toolkit law directs the Coordinating Partners to choose eligible communities from among the state's enterprise communities, HOPE VI communities, urban high crime areas, Front Porch communities, federal enterprise zones, neighborhood improvement districts, community redevelopment areas, and rural job tax credit areas. The application materials describe the boundaries of the eligible Toolkit communities.

As a result of these requirements, the Toolkit Coordinating Partners studied maps of Florida with all of these geographic areas designated. The law directs the Coordinating Partners to select nine communities from among all of the eligible applicants, for the Toolkit start-up initiative. Governor Jeb Bush ratified the selection of the Toolkit communities by executive order in early June.

The Toolkit application package includes the following materials:

- Toolkit application and attachments;
- Scoring sheet;
- Narrative description of eligible Toolkit communities;
- A map of your eligible Toolkit geographic community; and
- Application Instructions and exhibits.

If you have any questions about the Toolkit program, please call Sheree Keeler at 850-921-1119 or e-mail her at skeeler@workforceflorida.com.

Thank you for your interest in the Toolkit program. Good luck with your application.

Sincerely,

Curtis Austin