

§ 25.301 Selection factors for designation of nominated rural areas.

In choosing among nominated rural areas eligible for designation as Empowerment Zone, Enterprise Community or Champion Community, the Secretary shall consider:

(a) The potential effectiveness of the strategic plan, in accordance with the key principles in § 25.202(a);

(b) The strength of the assurances made pursuant to § 25.200(b) that the strategic plan will be implemented;

(c) The extent to which an application proposes activities that are creative and innovative;

(d) The extent to which areas consisting of noncontiguous parcels are not so widely separated as to compromise achievement by the nominated area of a cohesive community or regional identity; and

(e) Such other factors as established by the Secretary, which include the degree of need demonstrated by the nominated area for assistance under this part and the diversity within and among the nominated areas. If other factors are established by USDA, a FEDERAL REGISTER Notice will be published identifying such factors, along with an extension of the application due date if necessary.

§§ 25.302–25.399 [Reserved]

Subpart E—Post-Designation Requirements

§ 25.400 Reporting.

(a) *Periodic reports.* Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities and Champion Communities shall submit to USDA periodic reports which identify the community, local government and State actions which have been taken in accordance with the strategic plan. In addition to these reports, such other information relating to designated Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities and Champion communities as USDA may request from time to time shall be submitted promptly. On the basis of this information and of on-site reviews, USDA will prepare and issue periodic reports on the effectiveness of the Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities Program.

(b) *Annual report.* All rural Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities shall submit an annual report to USDA for each calendar year which includes an executive summary and benchmark progress report as follows:

(1) *Executive summary.* The executive summary shall identify the progress and setbacks experienced in efforts to achieve benchmark goals. Activities other than those expressly included in the strategic plan should also be noted in order to provide an understanding of where the community stands with respect to implementation of the strategic plan. Furthermore, the executive summary should address the following:

(i) Identify the most significant accomplishments to date.

(ii) Describe the level of community participation and overall support for the EZ/EC initiative.

(iii) List and describe new partnerships or alliances formed.

(iv) Identify problems or obstacles not otherwise anticipated in the strategic plan.

(v) Describe solutions developed or efforts to address the problems and obstacles.

(vi) Identify practices or concepts which were found especially effective in implementing the strategic plan.

(2) *Benchmark progress report.* For each benchmark goal the community will provide a current measure of the baseline condition which is the subject of targeted improvement and whether the current measure represents an improvement from the baseline condition as initially stated in the strategic plan. For each benchmark activity the community will provide a status report in form and substance acceptable to USDA.

(c) *Timely State data.* Where not prevented by State law, nominating State governments must provide the timely release of data requested by USDA for the purposes of monitoring and assisting the success of Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities.

§ 25.401 Responsibility of lead managing entity.

(a) *Financial.* The lead managing entity will be responsible for strategic plan program activities and monitoring the fiscal management of the funds of