

non-profit organizations, for-profit enterprises, local governments and families will work cooperatively to provide all individuals with the fundamental skills and knowledge they need to become active participants and contributors to their community, and to succeed in an increasingly competitive global economy;

(8) *Affordable housing.* The extent to which a housing component, providing for adequate safe housing and ensuring that all residents will have equal access to that housing is contained in the strategic plan;

(9) *Drug abuse.* The extent to which the plan addresses levels of drug abuse and drug-related activity through the expansion of drug treatment services, drug law enforcement initiatives, and community-based drug abuse education programs;

(10) *Health care.* The extent to which the plan promotes a community-based system of health care that facilitates access to comprehensive, high quality care, particularly for the residents of EZ/EC neighborhoods;

(11) *Equal opportunity.* The extent to which the plan offers an opportunity for diverse residents to participate in the rewards and responsibilities of work and service. The extent to which the plan ensures that no business within a nominated zone or community will directly or through contractual or other arrangements subject a person to discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, gender, handicap or age in its employment practices, including recruitment, recruitment advertising, employment, layoff, termination, upgrading, demotion, transfer, rates of pay or the forms of compensation, or use of facilities. Applicants must comply with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975.

§§ 25.205–25.299 [Reserved]

Subpart D—Designation Process

§ 25.300 USDA action and review of nominations for designation.

(a) *Establishment of submission procedures.* USDA will establish a time pe-

riod and procedure for the submission of applications for designation as empowerment zones or enterprise communities, including submission deadlines and addresses, in a notice inviting applications or other applicable notice, to be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(b) *Acceptance for processing.* USDA will accept for processing those applications as empowerment zones and enterprise communities which USDA determines have met the criteria required under this part. USDA will notify the states and local governments whether or not the nomination has been accepted for processing. The application must be received by USDA on or before the close of business on the date established by the notice inviting applications or other applicable notice published in the FEDERAL REGISTER. The applications must be complete, inclusive of the strategic plan, as required by § 25.202, and the certifications and written assurances required by § 25.200(b).

(c) *Site visits.* In the process of reviewing each application accepted for processing, USDA may undertake site visits to any nominated area to aid in the process of evaluation.

(d) *Modification of the strategic plan, boundaries of nominated rural areas, or period during the application review period.* Subject to the limitations imposed by § 25.100.

(1) USDA may request additional information pertaining to the strategic plan and proposed area and may, as a part of that request, suggest modifications to the strategic plan or nominated area that would enhance the effectiveness of the strategic plan;

(2) Enlargement of a nominated area will not be allowed if the inclusion of the additional area will result in an average poverty rate less than the average poverty rate at the time of initial application; and

(3) An applicant may modify the nominated area or strategic plan during the application review period with USDA approval.

(e) *Designations.* Final determination of the boundaries of areas and the term