

RESOLUTION NO. 23- 48

A RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR A REGIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR PURPOSES OF APPLYING FOR A U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA) STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT GRANT AND DESIGNATION AS A REGIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION HUB THROUGH THE EDA TECH HUB PROGRAM; EXPRESSING THE BOARD'S INTENT TO PROVIDE A REQUIRED LOCAL MATCH IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$100,000.00 FOR THE EDA PROGRAM; AUTHORIZING THE NEGOTIATION AND PREPARATION OF A LETTER OF COMMITMENT AND OTHER CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION TO THE EDA; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 28 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980, as amended (15 U.S.C. § 3722a), the US Economic Development Administration ("EDA") has announced FY 2023 Regional Technology and Innovation Hub Program (the "Program") Phase 1 Notice of Funding Opportunity ("NOFO") ("Tech Hub Phase 1 NOFO"); and

WHEREAS, the EDA seeks to strengthen U.S. economic and national security through place-based economic development investments, in regions with the assets, resources, capacity, and potential to become globally competitive technology hubs ("Tech Hubs"), in the technologies and industries of the future, to drive technology- and innovation-centric growth by strengthening a region's capacity to commercialize, manufacture, and deploy critical technologies; and

WHEREAS, the Program will support the modernization of United States manufacturing and improve commercialization and domestic production of innovative research; and

WHEREAS, Tech Hub Phase 1 NOFO applicants may pursue a Strategy Development Grant and/or a Tech Hub Designation; and

WHEREAS, Strategy Development Grants provide funding to awardees to facilitate awardees' preparation of applications for an Implementation Grant or potential future rounds of Tech Hub Designation; with individual grants awarded in amounts between approximately \$400,000 and \$500,000 depending on the level of local match; and

WHEREAS, EDA anticipates approximately \$15,000,000 in total being awarded in Phase

2 Implementation Grant; and ;

WHEREAS, a Tech Hub Designation is a prerequisite to applying to the Program’s Phase 2 Notice of Funding Opportunity (“Phase 2 NOFO”); and

WHEREAS, EDA expects to designate at least 20 Tech Hubs across the country; and

WHEREAS, EDA expects to release the Phase 2 NOFO in the Fall of 2023 for Implementation Grants; and

WHEREAS, Implementation Grants can fund a wide range of non-construction and construction activities that aim to increase regional capacity across the following four broad categories: workforce development, business and entrepreneur development, technology maturation, and infrastructure. This large suite of eligible activities is designed to meet the individual needs of a particular region and what it specifically needs to catalyze it becoming a sustainable, globally competitive Tech Hub in its consortium’s selected core technology area. EDA expects workforce development activities to be in line with the U.S. Department of Commerce’s workforce best practices, support placement into good jobs, including union jobs, and incorporate worker input into their design and delivery. In each Tech Hub selected for Implementation Grants, EDA expects to fund approximately 3-8 tightly aligned projects that aim to collectively address the region’s key inhibitors of global competitiveness at a total funding level of approximately \$50-75 million (\$65 million on average) for each Tech Hub that is selected under the Phase 2 NOFO for Implementation funding; and

WHEREAS, only consortia are eligible to apply for Strategy Development Grants, Tech Hubs Designation, and Implementation Grants; and

WHEREAS, a consortium that wants to apply for Implementation Grant funding this calendar year must apply for a Tech Hub Designation under the Tech Hub Phase 1 NOFO; and

WHEREAS, EDA has specific requirements for how regions construct cross-sector institutional consortia that can be effective long-term Tech Hubs. Organization and governance are in the Tech Hubs’ designation factors. No single institution typically has the knowledge and capacity to execute transformative regional economy strategies on its own. Because of tech-based economic development’s reliance on university-based research and talent, entrepreneurship ecosystems, industry partnerships, and government funding and coordination, it is uniquely dependent on networks of institutions working together with a unified vision. EDA acknowledges the need for this networked approach through the development of regional consortia; and

WHEREAS, each consortium must include at least one of the following: (1) institutions of higher education, which may include Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges or Universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions; (2) state, territorial, local, or Tribal governments or other political subdivisions of a state, including state and local agencies, or a

consortium thereof; (3) industry groups or firms in relevant technology, innovation, or manufacturing sectors; (4) economic development organizations or similar entities that are focused primarily on improving science, technology, innovation, entrepreneurship, or access to capital; and (5) labor organizations or workforce training organizations, which may include state and local workforce development boards; and

WHEREAS, EDA requires that each consortium identify a lead consortium member, which commits to: be the principal applicant for the Phase 1 Strategy Development Grant and/or Phase 1 Designation; serve as EDA's main point of contact during the competition and implementation; be the employer of the Regional Innovation Officer (RIO) or have an established relationship with that employer; serve as the central coordinator of the consortium by leading or otherwise having a significant role in the consortium's governance; convene public, private, academic, labor, and civic leaders to facilitate regional cohesiveness in maximizing the region's competitiveness; establish and maintain communication between the consortium and EDA to enable and accelerate collaboration and support; and ensure funding and other assistance provided by EDA and any other partners are absorbed effectively within communities; and

WHEREAS, the lead consortium member serves as the leader of the consortium and is accountable for continued coordination of its shared vision and strategy; and

WHEREAS, EDA defines a Tech Hub's geography as a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), and

WHEREAS, consortia must select and clearly identify one or more Key Technology Focus Areas (KTFAs) set out by the federal CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 and named in the NOFO; and

WHEREAS, these 10 focus areas are: (1) artificial intelligence, machine learning, autonomy, and related advances; (2) high performance computing, semiconductors, and advanced computer hardware and software; (3) quantum information science and technology; (4) robotics, automation, and advanced manufacturing; (5) natural and anthropogenic disaster prevention or mitigation; (6) advanced communications technology and immersive technology; (7) biotechnology, medical technology, genomics, and synthetic biology; (8) data storage, data management, distributed ledger technologies, and cybersecurity, including biometrics; (9) advanced energy and industrial efficiency technologies, such as batteries and advanced nuclear technologies, including but not limited to for the purposes of electric generation (consistent with 42 U.S.C. § 1874); and (10) advanced materials science, including composites 2D materials, other next-generation materials, and related manufacturing technologies; and

WHEREAS, leadership in these KTFAs is required because preeminence in them will enhance the competitive advantage and leadership of the United States in the global economy; and

WHEREAS, since equity and workforce development are important considerations, the NOFO goes beyond stipulations on technological innovation to include both equity and workforce

development. This could include an array of interventions: supporting affordable housing, building the capacity of small and minority-owned businesses in the supplier network, and several workforce initiatives. Equity will also influence the geography of where Tech Hubs will be designated. The NOFO follows the underlying statute to embrace “geographic diversity and representation” in future awards, strategy grants, and hub designations. This geographical equity acknowledges that larger and more populous metro areas tend to already have well-established innovation ecosystems. Therefore, at least one-third of Strategy Development Grants and Tech Hub Designations must “significantly benefit a small and rural community.” At the same time, at least two Tech Hubs must engage and benefit “underserved communities in and near metropolitan areas;” and

WHEREAS, the NOFO requests applicants to describe how they will grow the STEM workforce to be inclusive of a wide range of skill and experience levels—highlighting registered apprenticeships, career and technical education, community colleges, and labor management training programs. The NOFO also encourages employer practices for widening the recruitment pool, such as using skills-based hiring instead of relying on degrees as the sole proxy for skill. The NOFO underscores that workers can collaborate directly in the design, deployment, production, and delivery of new technologies. This obviously requires skilled workers, and the goal is to strengthen the innovation process; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Pinellas County, Florida (the “Board”) desires to partner with Hillsborough County, Pasco County and the University of South Florida, among other entities, to form such a consortium in accordance with the NOFO; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to have the University of South Florida (USF) designated as the lead consortium member to serve as EDA’s main point of contact and be the employer of the Regional Innovation Officer (RIO) or have an established relationship with that employer; and

WHEREAS, the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater MSA is well positioned to submit an application to receive one of the 20 national Tech Hub Designations as part of regional efforts, with our many existing industry and community partnerships, programming resources and assets for technical and workforce initiatives, as well as tech industry strengths in advanced manufacturing, cyber & defense technology, biomedical and health technology, and other areas of technology and innovation; and

WHEREAS, efforts to support regional economic development seek to identify new projects or initiatives of mutual benefit that are regional in nature, which can be pursued jointly by Pinellas County as well as neighboring counties. By adoption of this Resolution, the Pinellas BOCC, and similarly in like form via adoption by Hillsborough County and Pasco County, pursuit of the Tech Hub grant is deemed to meet the three-county objective of a joint initiative; and

WHEREAS, the necessary commitment of the Pinellas County share of the local match for the Tech Hub Phase 1 NOFO has been identified in the amount not to exceed \$100,000. Such commitment is based on equal participation in funding for the match from Hillsborough, Pinellas,

and Pasco County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Pinellas County, Florida, that:

**Section 1. Regional Consortium Support**

The Board supports a regional consortium for the purpose of applying for a U.S. Economic Development Administration Strategy Development Grant and designation as a regional Technology and Innovation Hub through EDA’s Tech Hub Program.

**Section 2. Matching Contribution**

The Board expresses its intent to provide a required local match in an amount not to exceed \$100,000.00 (the “County Local Match”) to be transferred to USF, as the lead consortium member, and used to meet the EDA twenty percent (20%) local match requirement for any Tech Hub Phase 1 NOFO Strategy Development Grant award. The provision of the County Local Match as provided for in this Resolution is subject to the following: the County enters into any agreements necessary to establish the local consortium in accordance with the NOFO; the Board subsequently makes any required future fiscal year appropriations in an amount sufficient to fund the County Local Match, based on available funds; the matching commitment is equally shared between Hillsborough, Pinellas and Pasco County; and the local consortium receives an award from the EDA of a Strategy Development Grant.

**Section 3. EDA Commitment Letter**

The Board authorizes the County Administrator, or his/her designee, to negotiate and prepare a Letter of Commitment directed to the EDA and such other contractual arrangements (collectively, the “EDA Commitment Letter”) associated with submission by USF of an application for the Tech Hub Phase 1 NOFO. The EDA Commitment Letter will outline the roles and responsibilities of the members of the local consortium, including USF’s role as the lead consortium member, primary applicant, grant recipient, and project scope manager on behalf of the consortium.

**Section 4. Additional Actions**

The Board authorizes and directs County staff to undertake any additional actions necessary in furtherance of assisting the USF in its submission of an application for the Tech Hub Phase 1 NOFO to the EDA in accordance with applicable law, County ordinances and policies.

**Section 5. Effective Date**

This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

In a regular meeting duly assembled on the 18th day of July, 2023, Commissioner Flowers offered the foregoing Resolution and moved its

adoption, which was seconded by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_ Justice \_\_\_\_\_, and upon roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Long, Eggers, Flowers, Justice, Latvala, and Scott.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT AND NOT VOTING: Peters.

**APPROVED AS TO FORM**

By: Cody J. Ward  
Office of the County Attorney