

# The reative Give Back

## ***Creative Economic Development Consulting Giving Away One Consulting Project a Year***

The Creative Give Back is Creative Economic Development Consulting's way to give back to the field of economic development and the communities we serve. Economic development has given us meaningful work and lifelong friends. We have enjoyed playing even the smallest part in improving thousands of lives through sustainable economic development.

We are giving back again in 2015. Our first recipient of the Creative Give Back was the **Alliance of South Charlotte Communities** in 2014. The Alliance was formed by the Towns of Indian Trail, Matthews, Mint Hill and Stallings, North Carolina. The **Creative EDC** team shaped the fledgling organization into a clear, concise vision with a three-year work plan. We educated, facilitated and advised elected officials and board members in such a way that instilled a collective confidence for them to move forward on their own.

"Crystal and **Creative Economic Development Consulting** brought a wealth of expertise to the table and actually took a genuine interest in our communities and in the individuals who participated in the process. The future success of the **Alliance of South Charlotte Communities** can be attributed, in large part, to the *Creative Give Back* grant. We owe Crystal and her team a great debt of gratitude for getting us on the right track." – Lee Bailey, Town of Mint Hill, Alliance Board Member

To be considered for The Creative Give Back, the project must:

- **BE CREATIVE**
- **Challenge us to think outside-the-box**
- **Have the ability to significantly impact the local economy**
- **Have a true, demonstrated consulting need**
- **Be consistent with sustainable economic development practices**
- **Give us the opportunity to work with a great community and great people**

Not required, but it would be helpful if the project:

- **Could be used as a pilot for other communities**
- **Had a broad or regional impact**

**Scope of Project:** The types of projects we will consider are as wide-ranging as the creativity of the applicant pool. Creative EDC has expertise in strategic planning, product development, organizational development, downtown and small business development, marketing, entrepreneurship, site selection, and many other areas of economic development. Our website has recent project examples, but don't limit project ideas to our list. We are looking for ways to help your unique community.

**Selection Process:** The Selection Process is pretty simple. Creative EDC staff will create a list of finalist projects. To make our finalist list, the project will be awarded points for:

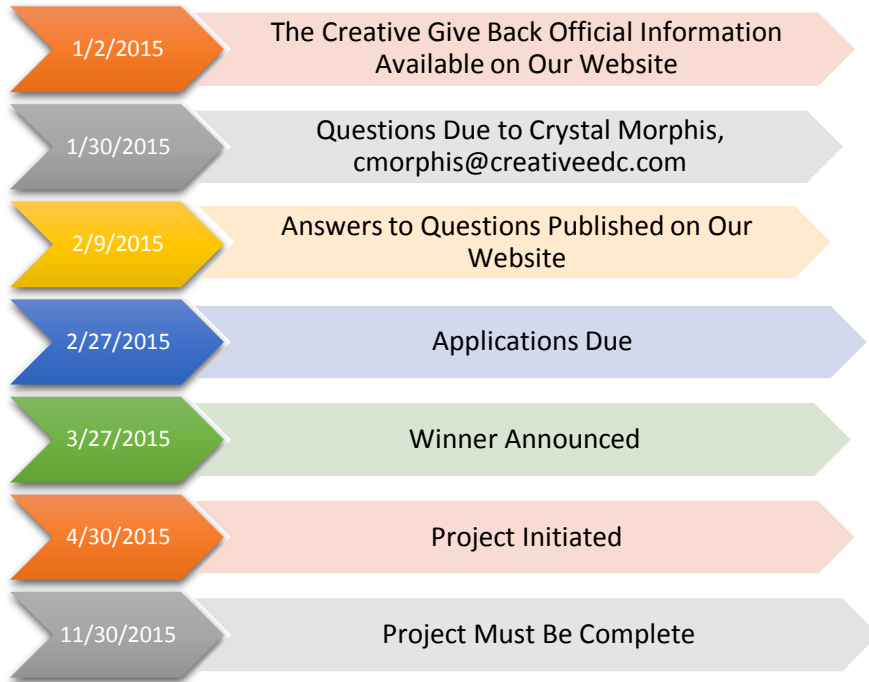
- Creativity
- Innovation
- Capability for economic transformation
- Demonstrated consulting need
- And just a few points for how much fun the project will be – If we're not getting paid at least we should have fun!

The staff-selected finalist projects will be reviewed and assessed by an independent Review Panel of strategic partners. We will not announce the Review Panel members in advance to avoid influencing, but we will name them when we announce the winner.

**Influencing** - Absolutely no influencing will be allowed. Keep the expensive dinners, sports event tickets, and bottles of wine. If you can afford all of that, then you could hire us instead of applying.

**Eligible Applicants** – Units of local governments and nonprofit economic development organizations in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia are eligible applicants. Communities do not have to be economically distressed. There could be many reasons the consulting project has remained unfunded. If you don't win this year, submit again next year.

**Deadlines** – We mean it. No late proposals. No extensions. Remember, like any good site selector, we're looking for reasons to eliminate.



**The Fine Print – Read the fine print to avoid surprises.**

- Creative EDC reserves the right to refuse any proposal.
- We are not responsible for the cost of proposal preparation or transmittal.
- All proposals will remain confidential. We do reserve the right to publish a list of applicants that apply each year.
- A scope of work will be finalized with the selected community. It will clearly state the services of Creative EDC. Scope creep will not be allowed. We are giving away one, defined project, not a lifelong retainer.
- The maximum value of services to be given away is \$25,000. If the selected project and finalized scope of work exceeds that amount, we will work with you to either redefine the scope/project to \$25,000 or allow you to pay the excess. If Creative EDC and the winner cannot reach an agreement on redefinition of the scope or for the winner to pay the excess, then Creative EDC reserves the right to terminate the relationship and go to the project entry that was next in line.
- Creative EDC is donating our fee for the project, but we require reimbursement for direct expenses such as mileage to meetings. We will clearly state what the expenses will be when we finalize the scope of work. We will use technology to host as many meetings remotely as possible to limit travel cost.
- Creative EDC is donating our services alone. If the project requires additional professional services, such as engineering, we will pass along those fees at cost and will clearly state this upfront to the winner.
- We will require a letter from the organization acknowledging our donation. If we are not getting paid, at least we can try to get some tax relief!
- The winning project must agree to allow Creative EDC to list it as a client; promote the project on our website and through other media; share a project summary with other communities; and potentially enter it for economic development awards.

## The Creative Give Back Application

As you organize your application for The Creative Give Back, keep in mind we will have a lot of proposals to read. Proposals that are clear, concise, and follow our outline will be easier to read; thus, more closely considered. As in a site selection process, if we have to search for the answer we may shove the proposal to the bottom of the stack.

Applications must include:

- A. **Cover Letter** – Summarize your proposal in a cover letter to be signed by an official of the organization that can attest to the accuracy of the information in the proposal. Include a contact name, phone number, and email.
- B. **Community Information** – Tell us about your community in an overview. What are your assets and challenges? What history does your community have supporting economic development projects? What background can you give us on the proposed project?
- C. **Organization Overview** – Tell us about your organization, team members, and how this project falls within your scope of work. Tell us who your allies are. Identify the primary project contact and include an organizational chart that shows who we would work with.
- D. **Project Scope of Work** – This is the place in your proposal to WOW us. The project will be selected, in large part, on how compelling a case is made for the creativity and innovation of the project.
  - a. Clearly define the project.
  - b. Project Goal – What do you hope to accomplish?
  - c. Project Innovation – Describe how this project is innovative, original, unique, and in every way CREATIVE.
  - d. Team Members - What role will Creative EDC play? Who will be involved from the community and what will their role(s) be?
  - e. Consulting Support - Outline the consulting expertise needed to achieve the goal.
  - f. Deliverables – What are the expected outcomes?
  - g. Implementation - What is the capacity for implementation?
- E. **Timeline** – Confirm that the project can be initiated in April 2015 and completed by November 2015.

- F. **Demonstrated Need** – Applicants do not have to be from economically distressed communities but there must be a consulting need. Why is an outside consultant needed versus using in-house staff? Explain why this project has not been funded using traditional means. Does your community have the resources to pay Creative EDC project expenses?
  
- G. **Letters from Local Organizations Endorsing the Project and Committing to Implementation Support** – We want to see that the project has widespread community support. The best ideas often lay dormant due to lack of community support. We will not award a project that has even the slightest chance of being left on the shelf.
  
- H. **Additional Information** – Include as an attachment additional information you want us to know about your community, organization, or project. Keep in mind that concise proposals will be favored so only include compelling additional information.

**Submittal Process** - Submit one electronic copy of your proposal to Crystal Morphis, Founder and CEO, Creative Economic Development Consulting, at [cmorphis@creativeedc.com](mailto:cmorphis@creativeedc.com).

Proposals must be received no later than **5:00 pm on February 27, 2015**. Note the timeline above for questions and answer posting. The electronic form shall be a PDF version of the fully signed proposal and emailed to the above contact. Make provisions if the file size is large such as using Drop Box. No late proposals will be accepted.

**Good luck!**