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The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) today issued requests for proposals for a model business development center to serve Indian tribes and individuals. The center would be expected to provide management and technical assistance, including help in obtaining private sector financing, for starting or expanding private businesses beneficial to Indian reservation economies.

"This initiative is an effort to shift the focus away from government projects to private ventures for building up reservation economies and providing needed jobs," Interior Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Ross Swimmer said. "We want to leverage available federal funds by combining them with tribal and private resources to further the growth of private, for-profit businesses. Past programs have been centered on tribal enterprises which too often have been run like governments rather than businesses."

Swimmer said that a pilot center could be expected to need federal startup assistance but should be, in the long run, a viable, independent, revenue-sufficient alternative to government-sponsored business technical assistance programs.

Models proposed under the request may be for a national or regional center or for a demonstration center. The BIA has indicated that it might accept more than one proposal.

Evaluation of criteria will include how well a proposal deals with "identifying business opportunities, market-led growth opportunities, linkages with private sources of capital, business planning, restructuring of unprofitable business, equity participation and cost sharing."

Other factors will be personnel and organizational qualifications; replicability and adaptability of the proposal; budget and cost effectiveness and demonstrated experience in Indian business development.

Announcement of the request for proposals was published 1n the Commerce Business Daily on May 5, 1986.

For further information contact Peter Markey, BIA Contracts and Grants, Room 17, 1951 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20245.