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**Empire State Development Announces Next Step Toward Establishing
Western New York Workforce Training Center**

Request for Proposals issued to select an Operator of the Center, a Signature Buffalo Billion project

Empire State Development (ESD) today announced the next step toward establishing the Western New York Workforce Training Center (the "Center"), a new hub that will focus primarily on training for careers in the advanced manufacturing and energy sectors. ESD, the state's economic development agency, issued a request for proposals (RFP) for qualified for-profit companies, not-for-profit organizations, and/or teams to submit their qualifications and proposals to serve as the official Operator of the Center. The Center, a signature initiative of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Buffalo Billion initiative, is expected to begin operations in Buffalo in late 2017 and will train 300-400 workers yearly in manufacturing and energy jobs.

"The Western New York Workforce Training Center Operator will bring together our public and private partners to best respond to our region's industry workforce needs and will offer economic on-ramps to training, apprenticeships and career placement for local residents," **said Empire State Development President, CEO & Commissioner Howard Zemsky.**

The Center will be located at 683 Northland Avenue on the East Side of the City of Buffalo. It will anchor an estimated 35-acre modern business park as part of the Northland Corridor Redevelopment and will ensure a robust and diversified workforce of highly-trained, skilled workers ready to meet the challenges of the 21st century electric utility and advanced manufacturing industries. The Center is being developed under agreement with the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation (BUDC)—the City of Buffalo's not-for-profit land reclamation and development agency—using a combination of ESD and New York Power Authority (NYPA) funds.

The Center will use State University of New York (SUNY) educational partners to provide degree and certificate training programs in advanced manufacturing and energy sectors, including programs to support NYPA future training needs. Its programs will be geared toward a combination of target groups that traditionally have not been sufficiently represented in the labor forces for these sectors.

The proposals are due to ESD by 3 p.m. on Tuesday, June 14, 2016. For more information and a link to the RFP announcement, visit [here](#).

Successful respondents to the solicitation will be required to commit to a 15 percent Minority-owned Business Enterprise (MBE) and 15 percent Women-owned Business Enterprise (WBE) contracting goals (related to the percentage of total ESD funds provided), which should include, but not be limited to, opportunities for MBEs and WBEs to provide goods and services related to the operations of the Center as either prime contractors or subcontractors.

“Today we are continuing to move forward on a pivotal project that will transform a section of Buffalo’s East Side into a vibrant economic driver for the neighborhood and the entire city of Buffalo,” **said City of Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown**. “I thank Governor Cuomo for his commitment to the Western New York Workforce Training Center and look forward to the selection of the official Operator of the Center that will provide an environment for city residents to gain valuable training for good-paying, sustainable jobs.”

“The need for new workers is growing as the pace of retirement quickens at utilities and other companies in the energy sector,” **said New York Power Authority Chairman John Koelmel**. “This center will serve as a beacon of hope on the East Side, letting people know that if they acquire the skills, a well-paying job will be waiting for them.”

“The selection of an operator is a crucial step as we move closer to the day when we start up the pipeline for a new stream of employees in sectors so crucial to the State’s economic development,” **said NYPA President and CEO Gil C. Quiniones**.

“With the state’s \$44 million investment in this state-of-the-art workforce training facility, we will soon breathe new life into vacant buildings on Buffalo’s East Side, and bring new opportunity to residents seeking to further their employment,” **said Senator Tim Kennedy**. “As the RFP process opens, now is the chance for local companies and non-profits to play a role in the future of this unprecedented economic generator, and contribute to the growth and revitalization that this neighborhood needs and deserves.”

“The process of selecting the official operator of the center brings us closer to opening day. The Western New York Workforce Development Center will facilitate training for career opportunities in advanced manufacturing and the growing energy sector,” **said Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes**. “As companies grow and expand we need to ensure that a skilled workforce is readily available. I applaud Governor Cuomo on his continued effort in investing in Buffalo’s diverse workforce.”

About Empire State Development

Empire State Development (ESD) is New York’s chief economic development agency (www.esd.ny.gov). The mission of ESD is to promote a vigorous and growing economy, encourage the creation of new job and economic opportunities, increase revenues to

the State and its municipalities, and achieve stable and diversified local economies. Through the use of loans, grants, tax credits and other forms of financial assistance, ESD strives to enhance private business investment and growth to spur job creation and support prosperous communities across New York State. ESD is also the primary administrative agency overseeing Governor Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Councils and the marketing of "I Love NY," the State's iconic tourism brand. For more information on Regional Councils and Empire State Development, visit www.nyworks.ny.gov and www.esd.ny.gov.

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