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2015 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NYMEP RTDC Competition 15-6111

PROPOSALS DUE: November 24, 2015 by 4:00 P.M.
(Late proposals cannot be accepted)

RFP Released: October 26, 2015

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I. Program Overview and Requirements

A. Program Introduction, Goals and Objectives

The National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) works with small and medium-sized U.S. manufacturers to help them create and retain jobs, increase profits, and save time and money. The nationwide network provides a variety of services, from innovation strategies and process improvements, to sustainable manufacturing, supply chain and technology acceleration services. MEP centers also work with partners at the state and federal levels on programs that position manufacturers to develop new customers, expand into new markets and create new products.

As a program of the U.S. Department of Commerce, MEP offers a range of effective resources to help manufacturers identify opportunities that will accelerate and strengthen their growth and competitiveness in the global marketplace.

MEP is a nationwide network of more than 1,200 technical experts located in every state. They serve as trusted business advisors focused on transforming U.S. manufacturers to compete globally by supporting supply chain integration, and providing access to technology for improved productivity. MEP is built around manufacturing extension centers located throughout the 50 states and Puerto Rico. MEP Centers are a diverse network of state, university-based non-profit, and other non-profit organizations, offering products and services that address the critical needs of their local manufacturers.

Each MEP Center works directly with area manufacturers to provide expertise and services tailored to their most critical needs, ranging from process improvement and workforce development, to business practices and technology transfer. Additionally, MEP Centers connect manufacturers with government and trade associations, universities and research laboratories, and a host of other public and private resources to help them realize individual business goals. For more information about the NIST MEP program visit <http://www.nist.gov/mep/>.

Historically, Empire State Development's (ESD) Division of Science, Technology & Innovation has served as the New York MEP center. Within New York State this program has been known as the Regional Technology Development Centers (RTDC) which is a network of 10 independent, not-for-profit organizations. The purpose of the RTDC program is to cultivate the growth of high-tech industry and help smaller manufacturers modernize. Primarily through three programs — the Technology Development Organization (TDO) program, the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program, and the Industrial Technology Extension Service (ITES) program — RTDCs provide entrepreneurial and business assistance, financing and venture capital information, and federal research grant information and assistance. For more information, visit <http://esd.ny.gov/nystar/regionaltechctrs.asp>. The RTDCs will be referred to as MEP centers in this RFP and throughout the contract period.

ESD was recently re-designated as the New York MEP Center by NIST MEP. A summary of ESD's proposal to NIST MEPs competition will be posted with this RFP at:

<http://www.esd.ny.gov/CorporateInformation/RFPs.html>.

NIST MEP will review ESD's progress and the progress of the centers designated under this RFP during or before the third year. If performance is deemed satisfactory by NIST MEP, ESD's designation period will be extended an additional five years. If this occurs, centers designated under this RFP will also receive a five year extension to their designation, as long as their performance is deemed satisfactory by ESD. If ESD's designation is not extended, then centers awarded under this RFP will have their designations end on December 31, 2020.

In light of this recent designation, ESD will hold a competitive application process using the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) portal to realign the MEP program in New York State to: provide support to the Regional Economic Development Councils (REDC) as related to manufacturing; focus on services that are not readily available; and increase the number of manufacturing companies served. Through this Request For Proposals (RFP) ESD will designate eleven centers that will provide services and assistance that meet the goals and missions of NIST MEP and ESD. The eleven centers include ten regional centers and one statewide center. The CFA can be accessed here: <https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/>.

Through this program, ESD will provide funds to this network of organizations whose mission is to provide services (described in Sections I.E. of this RFP) primarily to small- and medium-sized manufacturers, science and technology-based businesses, and start-ups.

Specifically, the objectives of this program are to:

- Improve competitiveness and increase the market share of small- and medium-sized manufacturers in New York through the introduction of new technology and best practices;
- Create and retain jobs in New York;
- Increase investment in and investment by New York manufacturing and technology-based companies;
- Facilitate the movement of technology discoveries from academic research centers into creation of new companies or the expansion of existing New York State companies; and
- Increase the economic benefits to New York companies and the entire state by fostering innovation.

The program is an integrated service delivery initiative that draws on three related programs: the state Technology Development Organization (TDO) program, the state Industrial Technology Extension Service (ITES) program, and the Federal Manufacturing Extension Partnership program. Statutory authority for these programs is found in §3102-d of the Public Authorities Law (for the State TDO program); §3102-a of the Public Authorities Law (for the State ITES program); and US Code Title 15, Chapter 7, §278 (for the Federal MEP program), administered by Empire State Development's Division of Science, Technology & Innovation (STI), and its successors, under Cooperative Agreements

with the National Institute of Standards and Technology. All requirements found in the aforementioned statutes as well as the Cooperative Agreements with NIST apply to the program. Definitions of specific terms used throughout the RFP are included in Appendix A.

B. Designations, Contract Period and Award Amounts

1. Designation and Contract Periods

Organizations will be designated to offer direct and in-direct assistance to manufacturers to fulfill the mission and programmatic requirements as identified by NIST MEP and ESD. Up to ten NYS MEP regional centers (one in each Economic Development Region) and one NYS MEP statewide center will be designated under this RFP.

Each REDC has been charged with identifying a priority Regional Economic Cluster through the Regional Economic Cluster Program. Priority Cluster information will be provided in each REDC 2015 Strategic Plan, which will be posted at <http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/>.

MEP regional centers will work closely with their REDC to provide support for the designated Priority Cluster. In addition, regional centers will offer services that are currently not readily available within their region where a demonstrated need exists.

The MEP statewide center will market capabilities of ESD funded entities, host or support events that foster innovation, and act as a referral entity for centers or companies that need assistance. The statewide center will also administer the **Technology Engagement Fund** created through this RFP. This new fund will be available, through a competitive application process, for technology development and commercialization efforts. These efforts may include: prototype development; product validation; engaging early adopters; competitions; and other activities that assist companies/individuals through the “valley of death” of commercialization efforts.

Applications for funding through the Technology Engagement Fund will be accepted at a minimum on a bi-annual basis. Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by the statewide center (or a board to be developed later) and ESD to determine awarding of funds. The maximum award under this fund will start at \$75,000 per year for the first year of the program and increase to \$100,000 per year in year two and for the remainder of the contract period. ESD reserves the right to raise the award ceiling at any point of the contract period.

The contract period for the eleven designations made under this RFP will begin January 1, 2016 and end December 31, 2020. This designation period is the same period for which ESD holds the NIST MEP designation.

Effective August 1, 2013, not-for-profit organizations must be prequalified in order to do business with New York State. In order to prequalify, not-for-profit organizations must follow the Prequalification process on the Grants Gateway at the following website: https://grantsgateway.ny.gov/IntelliGrants_NYSGG/module/nysgg/goportal.aspx. The

NYS MEP Regional or Statewide Designations

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Prequalification process is comprised of five components to gauge your organizational structure and the types of services you provide. The required forms and document uploads are all part of the Document Vault. Resources to complete the application and associated document vault can be found in the Quick Links Section of the Gateway. Prequalification status of each applicant will be verified by ESD.

NIST MEP will review ESD’s progress and the progress of the centers designated under this RFP during or before the third year. If performance is deemed satisfactory by NIST MEP, ESD’s designation period will be extended an additional five years. If this occurs, centers designated under this RFP will also receive a five year extension to their designation, as long as their performance is deemed satisfactory by ESD. If ESD’s designation is not extended, then centers awarded under this RFP will have their designations end on December 31, 2020.

Contracts will be executed between ESD and Award Recipients. See timetable (Section II.A.) for dates the contract is expected to begin. Any awards that have not been contracted by the date specified may be rescinded.

If ESD finds the contractual performance of a NYS MEP designated (regional or statewide) center unsatisfactory, the center’s contract and designation may be terminated before the end of the designation period. The center director and/or board chairman must be notified in writing thirty days prior to such termination. In such a case, ESD may administer a competitive process to designate another organization.

2. Available Funding

Through this competition, ESD expects to make approximately \$9.8 million available in the first year of funding, subject to the availability of funds, to designated centers. Funds will be awarded through the CFA process. Funds awarded under this RFP include three different funding sources: Federal MEP funds, State ITES funds, and State TDO funds. Matching fund requirements and activities that are eligible for funding are described in Sections I.D. and I.E of this RFP.

3. Award Amounts

The amount of funding for the regional MEP centers is based on the number of manufacturers with less than 500 employees within each region. Funding levels will be:

Number of Manufacturers	Funding Level
0 – 1,000	\$575,000
1,001 – 2,000	\$850,000
Over 2,000	\$950,000

The ten MEP regions are consistent with the economic development regions established pursuant to §230 of the Economic Development Law. The chart below lists the ten regions, the counties contained therein, the Priority Cluster in each region as identified by the REDC, the estimated amount

NYS MEP Regional or Statewide Designations

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of FY 2016 funds available, and the required match. In addition, FY2016 funds available for the statewide center and Technology Engagement Fund are listed.

Regions-# of manufacturers* (Counties within region)	Priority Cluster	Federal (ESD Funds)	NYS (ESD Funds)	Total ESD Funds	Required Match	Total Budget
Western New York – 1,594 (Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, & Niagara)	Materials and Machinery	\$560,000	\$290,000	\$850,000	\$270,000	\$1,120,000
Finger Lakes – 1,525 (Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, & Yates)	Optics, Photonics, and Imaging	\$560,000	\$290,000	\$850,000	\$270,000	\$1,120,000
Southern Tier - 602 (Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, & Tompkins)	Advanced Transportation Products, Components, and System Controls	\$380,000	\$195,000	\$575,000	\$185,000	\$760,000
Central New York - 733 (Cayuga, Cortland, Cortland, Onondaga, & Oswego)	Data to Decisions (D2D)	\$380,000	\$195,000	\$575,000	\$185,000	\$760,000
North Country - 309 (Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, & St. Lawrence)	Transportation Equipment and Materials	\$380,000	\$195,000	\$575,000	\$185,000	\$760,000
Mohawk Valley – 506 (Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, & Schoharie)	Cybersecurity	\$380,000	\$195,000	\$575,000	\$185,000	\$760,000
Capital Region - 872 (Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, & Warren, & Washington)	Research, Development, and Commercialization	\$380,000	\$195,000	\$575,000	\$185,000	\$760,000
Mid-Hudson – 1,694 (Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, & Westchester)	Food and Beverage Manufacturing	\$560,000	\$290,000	\$850,000	\$270,000	\$1,120,000
New York City – 5,729 (Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, & Richmond)	Smart Cities	\$635,000	\$315,000	\$950,000	\$320,000	\$1,270,000
Long Island – 3,110 (Nassau & Suffolk)	Biotechnology	\$635,000	\$315,000	\$950,000	\$320,000	\$1,270,000
Total Funds		\$4,850,000	\$2,475,000	\$7,325,000	\$2,375,000	\$9,700,000

*According to New York State Department of Labor

Statewide Designation	Federal (ESD Funds)	NYS (ESD Funds)	Total ESD Funds	Required Match	Total Budget
Statewide	\$1,135,194	\$264,806	\$1,400,000	\$0	\$1,400,000
Tech Engagement Fund**	\$0	\$1,033,194	\$1,033,194	\$0	\$1,033,194
Total Funds	\$1,135,194	\$1,298,000	\$2,433,194	\$0	\$2,433,194

**The Technology Engagement Fund will be administered by the statewide center designated under this RFP. State and federal funding that has been allocated to the MEP program, but has not been spent, may be reallocated to the fund in future years.

4. Adjustment to Award Amounts

a. Additional Available Funds

ESD may adjust award amounts and/or distribute additional funds that may become available to the MEP program. Potential funds include, but are not limited to, additional federal funds or other grants for which ESD, an individual regional NYS MEP or the statewide MEP center may be eligible.

Any increases in state or federal funding will be used for either the development of new initiatives / programs or distributed to the eleven centers and the Technology Engagement Fund in the following manner:

- Twenty-five percent of the increase in funding will be allocated to the Technology Engagement Fund; and
- Seventy-five percent will be distributed to the eleven centers on a ratio basis equal to the percentage of funding allocated in this RFP.

Decreases in funding will be handled in the following manner:

- Twenty-five percent of the increase in funding will be allocated to the Technology Engagement Fund; and
- Seventy-five percent will be distributed to the eleven centers on a ratio basis equal to the percentage of funding allocated in this RFP.

b. Poor Performance

ESD may reduce or remove the funding of an MEP due to poor contractual performance pursuant to provision of the contract and subject to the annual allocation formula described above. The center director and/or board chairman must be notified in writing thirty days prior to such funding reduction.

C. Eligibility and Program Requirements

Any not-for-profit or non-profit university-based entity that performs activities including, but not limited to the promotion, attraction, development and expansion of manufacturing-oriented and science and technology-oriented economic activity in New York State is eligible to apply for NYS MEP

(regional or statewide) center designation.

1. General Requirements

- a. The Applicant must demonstrate the ability to provide the services listed in Section I.E.
- b. The Applicant must demonstrate the ability to meet the matching funds requirements explained in Section I.D.
- c. The Applicant must be in good financial standing.
- d. An eligible organization may apply for one NYS MEP designation, either as a regional or statewide center, and may only submit one proposal.
- e. Each NYS designated MEP center must have an oversight board that is broadly representative of stakeholders with a majority of board members drawn from local small- and medium-sized manufacturing firms. Members of a Center's oversight board may not concurrently serve on more than one Center's oversight board. If a Center's oversight board does not meet the requirements of this paragraph at any time during the term of this award, the Center must disclose the deficiencies to ESD and must submit a detailed plan for bringing its oversight board into compliance with this term within 12 months. Additionally, each Center oversight board shall adopt bylaws governing the operation of the board, including a conflict of interest policy to ensure relevant relationships are disclosed, and proper recusal procedures are in place. In addition, the method for determining the compensation of key employees should be included in the policy and voted on by board on an annual basis.

2. General Limitations

- a. ESD funds available through this RFP will be granted to support the activities and items described in Section I.E.
- b. ESD funds available through this RFP **cannot** be used for capital construction costs.

D. Matching Funds Requirements

A breakdown of required match for the first year of the contract is listed in section I.B.3. Each MEP must meet matching funds requirements to be eligible for reimbursement. Matching requirements are subject to change and may increase or decrease based on changes to funding levels, source of funding, and/or programmatic changes.

For an MEP to receive its full annual allocation, expenses submitted must demonstrate adequate match and be approved by ESD.

1. Matching Fund Requirement for Federal MEP Funding and Categories of Acceptable Match

Federal MEP funds carry a 1:1 match requirement for years one through three. In other words, \$1 of matching funds must be spent for every \$1 of ESD funds spent. Match for year four is currently

scheduled to increase to 1.5:1 and 2:1 in year five and remain at 2:1 every year thereafter. The following categories of match are eligible to match Federal MEP funds:

- a. ESD State —A Center’s expenditures of ITES and TDO funds (combined and identified as ESD funds in this RFP) are eligible to match its Federal MEP allocation as described in Section I.D.2.a.
- b. Non- ESD State funds—State grant funds awarded to and expended by the MEP from such sources that include, but are not limited to, the New York State Department of Labor, and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). State funds granted directly to a company but used by the company to pay for MEP services are also treated as Non-ESD State funds.
- c. Local Cash—Matching funds contributed from non-government sources including fees charged companies for direct services, membership fees, and other cash match.
- d. In-Kind—Quantifiable goods and services including, but not limited to, professional services and time, equipment, material and office space for use by an MEP in furtherance of its stated purposes or provided on behalf of the MEP to others for such purposes and for which there is no monetary remuneration. Discounted prices or rates are not eligible as in-kind. A specific item or service must be completely donated to qualify as an in-kind contribution. In-kind match cannot exceed one-half of the total Federal MEP match requirement.

Government funds are not eligible to match other government funds of the same type. (i.e. Federal funds cannot match the MEP funds). If at any time the federal match requirements are changed, this program will adopt the revised match requirements.

2. General Match Requirements and Limitations

- a. ESD reserves the right to make determinations concerning the extent to which funds, goods and services qualify as matching funds. All proposed matching funds must be approved by ESD before being credited. NYS designated MEP centers are required to document and maintain detailed records for all cash and in-kind match, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.
- b. Cash qualifies as matching funds only when it is expended by the NYS designated MEP center. In-kind qualifies as match only during the period in which it is received.
- c. No funds used as matching funds in any other ESD Proposal or contract are eligible to be used as matching funds for this program. If an expense is included as match, it may not also be included as a reimbursable expense for which public funding is requested.
- d. Matching funds contributions must be provided for, and traceable to, allowable items and activities as defined in Section I.E.

E. Supported Activities

Applicants seeking a regional MEP designation must demonstrate how they will support the Priority Cluster identified by the REDC.

A designated NYS MEP center will be expected to provide services throughout the entire economic development region in which it is designated. Each NYS MEP designated center must provide services either directly or through partnerships with other organizations. These services are to be available to small- and medium-sized manufacturers, science and technology-based businesses, start-up companies, and entrepreneurs in the MEP's designated region and/or supporting the REDC's Priority Cluster.

The ten regional NYS MEP designated centers shall work with the designated statewide MEP center to advance the state's manufacturing and science and technology-based industries by making and responding to referrals as appropriate. In addition, centers are expected to collaborate closely with ESD on the expenditure of marketing funds to ensure that these funds are expended in the best interests of each MEP program.

All eleven centers are expected to coordinate and collaborate to maximize efforts under this program. MEP Centers shall regularly participate in events and activities in an effort to identify the needs of manufacturers and compare those needs to available services, funding, or activities to identify where gaps exist. When a gap is identified, centers should develop pilot programs/initiatives to fill the gap.

When services are readily available in a region, MEP centers should engage other appropriate entities to provide assistance to the companies and not offer these services in-house. This program is not meant to duplicate already existing services or initiatives but to ensure manufacturers have access to the assistance they need that otherwise might not be available.

Applicants may only submit one proposal and apply for one of two center designations, a regional MEP Center or statewide center.

Option 1: Designated Regional MEP Center

Applicants applying to be a designated regional MEP center should propose how they will provide either directly or through partnerships, services that include, but are not limited to:

- a. Providing support to the Priority Cluster as identified by the REDC. Support may include: build-out of supply chains; company attraction; strengthening key enablers (workforce development, innovation and commercialization efforts); and/or coordinating efforts to encourage greater collaboration.
- b. Determining gaps in available services within the region and/or specific Cluster as identified by the REDC and developing services to fill those gaps.
- c. Assisting small- and medium-sized manufacturers to become more competitive by modernizing equipment and processes, incorporating new technologies, developing new products, and improving productivity.
- d. Providing links to and/or specialized assistance to accelerate technology commercialization and innovation, including prototyping, product validation, and identifying potential funding.

- e. Driving and promoting innovation by partnering with regional programs such as: business plan, innovation and entrepreneurial competitions.
- f. Coordinating services, outreach and other activities of assistance related to manufacturing with New York State's REDCs.
- g. Partnering with other capable entities to provide services that are readily available in the region or neighboring regions (ex. Lean, ISO, etc.).
- h. Assisting with workforce development efforts including identification of companies needs and working with universities, community colleges and other entities to address those needs.
- i. Designating an employee (.25 to .5 Full Time Equivalency) to food related manufacturing and assisting with market expansion as directed by ESD.
- j. Supporting and/or hosting Cluster focused events and activities in coordination with the statewide designated center to avoid duplication of activities or events.
- k. Engaging appropriate new initiatives and programs that are introduced in New York State.

Option 2: Designated Statewide MEP Center

The designated statewide MEP center will engage in activities that are the most promising for assisting company growth; increasing the success rate of early stage companies; or leading to job creation. Also, this center will administer the Technology Engagement Fund. The activities may include, but not be limited to:

- a. Designating three employees to assist ESD with program reporting, developing new programs/initiatives, attracting additional federal funding to NYS, preparing company attraction materials and other activities relevant to manufacturing and/or the MEP program.
- b. Assessing company needs and making referrals to appropriate resources.
- c. Hosting a portal for referring companies to appropriate resources and tracking responses.
- d. Hosting "Solution Forums" or other similar events that bring companies together with available resources.
- e. Engaging in efforts to expand market opportunities for companies.
- f. Attracting federal funding to the state.
- g. Marketing ESD and NYS programs, resources, initiatives and capabilities including, but not limited to MEPs, Centers for Advanced Technology, Centers of Excellence, New York State Innovation Hot Spots, and the High Performance Computing Consortium.
- h. Developing and updating materials for marketing MEP program services.
- i. Arranging tours of assets and resources for ESD centers (MEPs, Centers for Advanced Technology, Centers of Excellence, New York State Innovation Hotspots, and the High Performance Computing Consortium; etc.) to increase awareness and knowledge of capabilities and expertise in an effort to foster collaboration.
- j. Offering a calendar of events page for ESD funded entities to post upcoming events and meetings.

- k. Providing supply chain training directly or through a train-the-trainer model.
- l. Supporting initiatives through partnership models to rollout initiatives statewide (for example: shared staff model to market food products across the state).
- m. Managing and providing technical support (including reasonable upgrades) for an STI program reporting portal ensuring confidentiality of sensitive information.
- n. Hosting STI's annual meeting to further engage all centers across all programs to encourage collaboration.
- o. Capturing and analyzing data of company engagements, trends and other information that can be used for marketing and/or development of new or revised programs/initiatives.

Administering the Technology Engagement Fund

The statewide center shall administer the Technology Engagement Fund. This funding may be used, upon approval of ESD, for joining organizations when membership benefits the New York MEP system.

In addition, a non-profit university-based or not-for-profit organization may apply for funding for technology development, commercialization efforts or innovation generation in general. Industry partnership(s) must be demonstrated within the proposal. Proposals for this funding will be accepted on a bi-annual basis (with an option for quarterly basis). Both ESD and the statewide MEP center will accept, review, and evaluate proposals to determine the funding award. A scaled match will be required based on the stage of the company with a maximum 1:1 required match. For the first year of this fund, the maximum award will be \$75,000 per project per year. Amounts may increase up to \$100,000 per year in year two and for the remainder of the contract period. ESD reserves the right to raise the award ceiling at any point of the contract period. Funding may be used for:

- a. Prototype development; product validation; engagement of early adopters, competitions and other commercialization efforts.
- b. Supporting or hosting events and/or competitions focused on commercialization efforts or assistance to early stage companies.
- c. Hosting training for ESD centers to enable the offering of improved or new services that will benefit New York State manufacturers such as "Technology Driven Market Intelligence" (<http://www.nist.gov/mep/upload/TDMI.pdf>) and "Technology Scouting" (http://www.nist.gov/mep/upload/TechScout_AmphenoI_FINAL_web.pdf).
- d. Assisting with equipment purchases when two or more companies have demonstrated: the need for such equipment; a utilization rate of fifty percent or more; an agreement on location and shared access; and a willingness to allow use by other New York State companies as appropriate.
- e. Supporting manufacturing scale-up (i.e., going from bench-top / pilot production to a full manufacturing production line).
- f. Launching new products including marketing, product trials, etc.

Projects can be funded for a two year period with second year funding contingent upon satisfactory progress having been made in the first year of the project.

F. Use of ESD Funds

1. ESD NYS MEP program funds may be used for the following items in direct support of services described in Section I.E.1 and I.E.2:
 - a. Salaries and fringe benefits for MEP employees;
 - b. Necessary equipment, materials and supplies;
 - c. Travel related to activities supported within this RFP pursuant to Section I.E., or to ESD or NIST meetings. ESD reserves the right to require attendance of center representatives at various events throughout the year;
 - d. Services subcontracted to partner organizations or other third parties to assist the center in conducting the activities supported within this RFP pursuant to Section I.E.;
 - e. Reasonable expenditures associated with operating the center such as rent, utilities, insurance, staff training and marketing, etc.; and
 - f. Other purposes explicitly approved by ESD prior to being incurred.

2. ESD Funds Limitations
 - a. The best available price for the type and quality of products or services required must be sought for any ESD-funded expenditure. The MEP must retain documentation to support the solicitation process and/or choice of vendor for ESD expenses.
 - b. Indirect costs are capped at fifteen percent for funds involved in this RFP.

G. Reporting and Monitoring Requirements

1. General Provisions
 - a. Centers must submit quarterly progress and financial reports to ESD using specific reporting guidelines and forms.
 - b. Centers must maintain an accounting system in conformance with generally accepted accounting principles that permits identification of all expenditures and revenues.
 - c. Contract payments are contingent on ESD's receipt and review of required reports and may be impacted by the Center's compliance with other ESD contracts.

2. Economic Impacts

Impacts generated by the Center will be measured by a third party survey house contracted by NIST and by additional means deemed appropriate by ESD to measure and substantiate the success of the MEP program and each Center, and to satisfy ESD and/or NIST reporting requirements.

H. Sample Contract

A sample ESD contract can be found at: <http://www.esd.ny.gov/CorporateInformation/RFPs.html>.
Terms and conditions of an executed contract may vary.

II. Submission Information

A. Timetable

2015 Competition Timetable	
Start date for 2015 Competition (CFA Opens)	October 26, 2015
Written questions on proposals accepted through	November 16, 2015, 4pm
Proposals received by ESD by	November 24, 2015, 4pm
Contract expected to begin on	January 1, 2016

B. Questions on the RFP

Questions regarding this RFP may be submitted by e-mail to the address below.

E-mail: rtdcfaq@esd.ny.gov.

Once the deadline for submitting questions has passed, ESD will make questions and responses regarding this RFP publicly available on the ESD RFP Web page at <http://www.esd.ny.gov/CorporateInformation/RFPs.html>.

C. Submission Instructions

Applicants must submit their proposals through the New York State's Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) website <https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/>.

Forms included in Appendix B to this RFP which are located at <http://www.esd.ny.gov/CorporateInformation/RFPs.html>, should be uploaded into the CFA system in the appropriate locations.

Proposals must be submitted by 4 p.m. on November, 24, 2015

Failure to submit on time will result in the proposal being deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed.

ESD reserves the right to contact partners and other individuals identified in the proposal to validate or elaborate on the information presented.

D. Proprietary Information

Some information contained in a Proposal may be considered sensitive and the Applicant may wish it not to be disclosed if possible. If this is the case, the Applicant must identify the information it wishes to protect and request that it be protected.

ESD will take efforts to safeguard proprietary, confidential and sensitive information as allowed under the law, including the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) (see Article 6 of the Public Officer's Law). However, all information will be made available to those who are conducting the review of the proposals.

To request an exception to FOIL, an Applicant must submit a letter included as **Appendix 6** to the Proposal specifically identifying the sensitive information and reasons it should be protected. The Applicant must identify the information with a CONFIDENTIAL, PROPRIETARY or SENSITIVE notation at the beginning of each answer that contains sensitive information provided within the CFA system.

III. Proposal Contents and Review Criteria

Applicants must ensure that proposals have been thoroughly reviewed for clarity and professional presentation.

A. Glossary of Terms Used

Include an alphabetized glossary of acronyms and technical terms used in the proposal and a brief definition of each.

B. Executive Summary

Include an executive summary that sets forth a self-contained description of the activities and benefits that would result if the proposal were funded.

The Executive Summary must **not** contain any proprietary information and must be suitable for publication.

C. Scoring and Designations

Applicants may only apply for one designation under this RFP and submit only one proposal. If more than one proposal is submitted only the first one received will be considered. Proposals for the statewide center designation will be scored solely by ESD's review panel. For proposals seeking a

regional designation, ESD’s review panel will provide a score up to 80 point and the REDC scorers will provide a score up to 20 points for each proposal.

D. Regional Council Review

Proposals for regional designations will be scored by each REDC in which the proposed center will be located and services offered. The materials available to the regional council will contain all information necessary for review of the application. Confidential or proprietary information in the application will be included in the material reviewed by ESD but will not be available to the REDC.

1. Review and Score CFAs

Each REDC will review and rank applications based on a set of standards, referred to as “endorsement standards.” REDC will assign each project a single score of 20, 15, 10, 5 or 0 (no fractions) based on merit. The REDC endorsement will account for 20% of the total review for the regional center designations.

2. Endorsement Standards

Each REDC will utilize endorsement standards when reviewing CFAs submitted to their region. REDC will take into account the degree to which the application helps implement the Priority Cluster plan as identified in their regional strategic plan. Applicants may take these standards into account when preparing applications.

Regional Council Endorsement Standards		
For each CFA the REDC reviewer will determine the degree to which the application advances the Cluster plan as identified in the regional strategic plan and assign the corresponding number of points as a score.		
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN	DEGREE	POINTS
The proposal strongly supports the Cluster plan identified by the REDC.	Priority	20
The proposal supports the Cluster plan and has regional benefits.	Very Strong	15
The proposal supports the Cluster plan and has local benefits.	Strong	10
The proposal is consistent with the Cluster plan.	Moderate	5
The proposal has limited relationship to the Cluster plan.	Weak	0

E. NYS MEP Regional and Statewide Center Designation Scoring Criteria

Applicants may apply for one of two designations, a NYS MEP regional center or a NYS MEP statewide center, and submit one proposal.

1. NYS MEP Regional Center

Centers are expected to support the REDC's Priority Cluster by engaging in activities to advance the Priority Cluster as it relates to manufacturing. This could include assisting companies from across the state that are within the identified Cluster. Centers are also expected to provide services and assistance available to all manufacturers within the region either directly or indirectly through partnerships.

a. Economic Opportunity (20 points)

- i. Characterize the core needs and opportunities (including gaps in services) of the Cluster/region's manufacturing and high technology companies, placing special emphasis on those that are critical during the next five years. (5 points)
- ii. Identify examples of services that are readily available and the partners the center will likely engage to provide those services, i.e. lean ISO, etc. (5 points)
- iii. Describe the Applicant's current customer base of small- and medium-sized manufacturers and science and technology-based businesses. (5 points)
- iv. Explain the proposed plan to expand the REDC's Priority Cluster through: (5 points)
 1. Growth of existing/emerging companies and related assets;
 2. Build-out of regional supply chains;
 3. Attraction of out-of-state companies and related assets (including an action plan and linkage to your REDC's strategies);
 4. Strengthening of key enablers for Cluster growth (e.g. human capital, research capabilities, innovation and commercialization, infrastructure, local governance);
 5. Alignment and partnering with NYS assets in the region (Centers for Advanced Technology, Centers of Excellence, New York State Innovation Hot Spots, and the High Performance Computing Consortium, Small Business Development Centers, Cleantech Incubators, etc.); and
 6. Overall coordination of efforts, meetings/meet-ups, competitions and other events.

b. Technology Resources and Delivery Mechanisms (20 points)

- i. Describe services the center will offer to manufacturing and technology companies in its Cluster/region. Be specific about personnel who will be involved from the organization as well as any partner organizations that will be utilized in service delivery. (8 points)
- ii. Describe the Applicant's plan to attract and serve more manufacturing and technology customers. (7 points)
- iii. Explain the Applicant's plan to work with partners within in the region and statewide/national partners to offer companies resources and services to foster

innovation including universities and community colleges to amplify the center's reach and delivery of service. (5 points)

c. Center Management (20 points)

- i. Highlight the quality and relevant experience of the Applicant's center management and key staff to carry out the proposed activities and achieve program goals. (8 points)
- ii. Describe steps that may be taken to minimize administrative costs, including but not limited to: shared staff and/or co-locating offices with other economic development organizations that serve manufacturers, to ensure that as much funding as possible is used to fund service delivery to clients. (7 points)
- iii. Describe the experience of existing and proposed Board members and the degree to which the Board's members are representative of the manufacturing and academic research sectors. (5 points)

d. Budget (20 points)

NIST MEP may require centers to send personnel to a mid-December 2015 award kick off meeting. If awards under this RFP are made prior to December 1, 2015, centers will be required to send a representative to NIST MEP located in Gaithersburg, MD for that meeting. Travel expenses will be reimbursed, but no other expenses prior to January 1, 2016 can be covered.

Proposed budget should also include travel expenses for at least two NIST MEP quarterly meetings; two NIST MEP regional meetings; and three ESD meetings for the first year of the contract.

Use the budget form provided in Appendix B to this RFP.

- i. Degree to which the uses of ESD funds are reasonable and justified. (10 points).
- ii. The quality and appropriateness of non-ESD support identified to achieve the MEP program goals delineated in this RFP and those goals outlined in the Applicant's Proposal. (10 points)

2. NYS MEP Statewide Center

The statewide center is expected to increase the awareness of expertise and capabilities available to companies. Also, this center should have the capabilities in-house or through partnerships to assess company needs, make referrals to capable resources and track/monitor follow up. In addition, this center should engage in opportunities that foster innovation and increase collaboration.

a. Economic Opportunity (55 points)

- i. Describe Applicant's plan to administer the Technology Engagement Fund. (12 points)
- ii. Explain Applicant's experience with determining company's needs and making referrals to the appropriate resources. (12 points)
- iii. Identify likely events (including Solution Forums), competitions and other activities that may be held to encourage collaboration and foster innovation. (10 points)
- iv. Explain supply chain efforts and engagements available through the proposed center. (10 points)
- v. Describe the Applicant's marketing experience and ideas for highlighting capabilities of available resources and assets. (6 points)
- vi. Propose a plan for capturing and analyzing data of company engagements, trends and other information that can be used for marketing and/or development of new or revised programs/initiatives. (5 points)

b. Center Management (25 points)

- i. Highlight the quality and relevant experience of the Applicant's center management and key staff to carry out the proposed activities and achieve program goals. (8 points)
- ii. Describe steps that may be taken to minimize administrative costs, including but not limited to: shared staff and/or co-locating offices with other economic development organizations that serve manufacturers, to ensure that as much funding as possible is used to fund service delivery to clients. (7 points)
- iii. Describe the experience of existing and proposed Board members and the degree to which the Board's members are representative of manufacturing and academic research sectors. (5 points)
- iv. Describe how the center will work with ESD to identify three employees to assist with developing new programs/initiatives, reporting, attracting additional federal funding to NYS, preparing attraction materials, and other relevant activities. (5 points)

c. Budget (20 points)

NIST MEP may require centers to send personnel to a mid-December 2015 award kick off meeting. If awards under this RFP are made prior to December 1, 2015, centers will be required to send a representative to NIST MEP located in Gaithersburg, MD for that meeting. Travel expenses will be reimbursed, but no other expenses prior to January 1, 2016 can be covered.

Proposed budget should also include travel expenses for at least two NIST MEP quarterly meetings; two NIST MEP regional meetings; and three ESD meetings for the first year of the contract.

Use the budget form provided in Appendix B to this RFP.

- i. Degree to which the uses of ESD funds are reasonable and justified. (10 points)
- ii. The quality and appropriateness of non-ESD support identified to achieve the MEP program goals delineated in this RFP and those goals outlined in the Applicant's Proposal. (10 points)

F. Budget (Regional and Statewide)

The budget presented as part of an applicant's proposal is a best guess estimate. Awarded centers may make reasonable changes in the allocation across Budget Categories upon approval of ESD as contracts are being prepared.

Additionally, budgetary changes can be made during the contract period. An amendment that would result in a transfer of funds among program activities or budget cost categories that does not affect the amount, consideration, scope or other terms of such contract may be subject to the approval of the AG and OSC where the amount of such modification is, as a portion of the total value of the contract, equal to or greater than ten percent for contracts of less than five million dollars, or five percent for contracts of more than five million dollars; and, in addition, such amendment may be subject to prior approval by the applicable State Agency as detailed in Attachment D (Payment and Reporting Schedule).

Complete the yellow highlighted portion and submit as **Appendix 4** to the proposal. All matching funds committed to the proposal must remain dedicated to the MEP program.

1. Budget Form One – List any staff to be paid in whole or in part from ESD and/or matching funds. List each subcontractor and any other expenses on a separate line. For all other categories, indicate ESD and matching funds budgeted.
2. Budget Form Two – List sponsors for all committed matching funds, the amount and a description. Ensure that descriptions are adequate for in-kind.

Use of Funds

- a. Provide a justification for the requested funding. For each expenditure item listed below describe how both the requested ESD funds and matching funds will support the services described in the Applicant's proposal:
 - Personnel Expenses:
 - salaries
 - fringe benefits
 - Non-Personnel Expenses:
 - travel
 - equipment
 - supplies

- third party consultants for Center
- third party consultants for Clients
- other
 - marketing
 - staff training
 - rent
 - telephone
 - events
 - etc.

b. Describe the sources of non- ESD matching funds the Applicant intends to use to match its ESD expenditures.

G. Non-Discrimination and Contractor & Supplier Diversity

Pursuant to New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, ESD recognizes its obligation under the law to promote opportunities for maximum feasible participation of certified minority-and women-owned business in the performance of ESD contracts. For purposes of this program, however, goals will not be established as this program involves Federal reimbursement and is primarily for salaries and operating expenses.

H. Appendices to the Proposal

Include the following required appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Organization Chart
- Appendix 2 – Center Director and Key Staff Resume or Descriptive Biography
- Appendix 3 – Center Board Members Information Form
- Appendix 4 – Budget Forms
- Appendix 5 – Proprietary Information Exception Request (if applicable)

No sections, appendices, and/or supporting information to the Proposal beyond those items required by ESD in this RFP will be accepted or reviewed.

IV. Review Criteria and Process

The Applicant must submit a Proposal through the CFA system by the deadline that meets each requirement of this RFP. Failure to do so may result in the Proposal being rejected without review. Any questions regarding the MEP program or this RFP must be submitted according to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) process described in Section II.B. All Applicants are required to monitor the FAQ Web page for responses to questions as well as for any information ESD may post concerning this RFP.

For the review of eligible proposals, ESD has established the following criteria to be applied in accordance with the review process set forth in Section V.B. In addition to addressing the review criteria stated below, refer to the proposal instructions in Section IV. of this RFP for specific items that must also be addressed.

Review Process

Reviewers may include ESD staff, staff from federal or other state agencies, and individuals selected from the science, business, and academic communities. The reviewers will adhere to the process described in this section and will apply the review criteria detailed above. ESD may limit the number of proposals a reviewer is required to evaluate.

Scoring: Reviewers will independently evaluate and assign a preliminary score to proposals that have been accepted by ESD. The preliminary scores for a proposal will be combined to provide an initial average score for that proposal.

After the initial average scores are provided to the group, reviewers will convene as a group to review the preliminary scores and discuss the proposals in accordance with the review criteria. At the conclusion of the discussions, each reviewer will individually provide final scores for each proposal based upon the panel's discussions.

In the event of a scoring tie, "priority projects", or the proposal receiving the highest score by the REDC, will be the tie breaker. If more than one proposal's final score and REDC score are the same, than the review team will be reconvened to re-score the proposals in question.

ESD reserves the right to reject any and all proposals. ESD may recall this RFP at any time prior to award announcement and may also reject proposals for deficiencies; waive technicalities, irregularities, and omissions; or solicit new proposals. ESD reserves the right to act in accordance with the best interests of the people of New York in its interpretation of this RFP.

Applicants and/or their surrogates are prohibited from contacting any ESD staff to advocate on behalf of a Proposal submitted in response to this RFP. Violation of this restriction will disqualify an Applicant's Proposal from the competition.

V. Appendices to this RFP

Appendix A – Glossary of terms used

Appendix B – Required Forms (Center's Board Members Information Form; Budget Form, Vendor Responsibility Form, OCSD-2-Staffing Plan form)

APPENDIX A: Glossary of Terms Used in the RFP

The following definitions apply to the terms as used in this RFP:

Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR: An individual authorized to enter into legal agreements on behalf of, and commit resources of, the Applicant.

CFA: The Consolidated Funding Application portal (<https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/>) is used to apply for economic development projects.

Creditable Third Party: A survey house, an accountant, or another third party organization able to certify or verify that the stated economic impacts are accurate.

Key Staff: Staff other than the Center Director involved in decision-making or critical to the center's success.

Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Program: A nationwide network of local centers offering technical and business assistance to small and medium-sized manufacturers. See NIST MEP

Medium-sized Manufacturer: A manufacturing firm employing between 100 and 499 employees.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST): A non-regulatory federal agency within the U.S. Commerce Department's Technology Administration. NIST's mission is to promote U.S. innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science, standards, and technology in ways that enhance economic security and improve quality of life.

NIST MEP: The National Institute of Standards and Technology Manufacturing Extension Partnership (<http://www.nist.gov/mep/>) works with small and mid-sized U.S. manufacturers to help them create and retain jobs, increase profits, and save time and money.

Partner Organization: An organization selected by the Applicant to provide specified basic or specialty services to the Applicant's clients in coordination with the Applicant.

Small-sized Manufacturer: A manufacturing firm employing fewer than 100 employees.

Solutions Forum: This half-day forum is designed for NY manufacturing to meet directly with resources from across the state in a one-on-one "speed dating" format to identify assistance available to address issues the company is facing.