

**New York State Association of Counties
Request for Proposal
Research Organization for the
Workforce Intelligence Project**

Introduction and Background: The New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) is a bi-partisan organization representing the elected and policy leaders of the 57 counties and the City of New York in New York State. NYSAC is the recipient of a grant from the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) to provide Workforce Intelligence activities to regions in New York State. Under this grant, NYSAC is seeking the services of a research institution of demonstrated effectiveness to provide workforce intelligence research and economic and workforce development tools to elected leaders and policymakers in counties in New York State.

The Workforce Intelligence project is designed to promote active dialogue between local elected and community leaders on a regional basis, on the challenges and opportunities they will face in bringing about an economic renewal.

The ability for local leaders to make informed decisions on joint regional economic development strategies is directly related to the quality of the information they receive on regional economic trends. This project intends to develop and present research data to county leaders that is comprehensive, easily understandable and accessible to the general public.

Amount of Award: One award will be given; not to exceed \$186,000 per year renewable up to two additional years. The award will begin October 1, 2007 and potentially end December 31, 2009. Funding for this contract is contingent upon continued availability of funding to NYSAC from the NYSDOL.

Eligible Applicants include: Post Secondary Institutions and Not for Profit Organizations of demonstrated effectiveness who have expertise and experience in conducting economic research for regions in New York State. Applicants should have substantial credibility with both chief local elected officials and business leaders. Applicants must have access to and be able to manipulate US Census data and labor market information from the New York State Department of Labor. An organization's access to other economic research tools is also a plus. Applicants should also have expertise in rural, business and labor issues.

Proposals should consist of a transmittal letter, the Proposal Narrative (instructions below), and a detailed, line item budget.

Transmittal Letter: Should include the name and address of the applicant agency, a designated proposal contact individual, and all contact information including phone and e-mail.

Proposal Narrative Instructions:

Applicant Qualifications: Please describe the qualifications of the applicant, including the ability to access the required data and the ability to perform the research, analysis and other activities outlined in the scope of services. Attach resumes of all staff who will be conducting research activities on behalf of the applicant.

Previous experience: Include a detailed description of past research projects and other relevant experience of the applicant. Include contact information for at least three references. Previous experience in conducting this type of research in New York State is a plus.

Scope of Services to be provided by the Research Institution. The goal is to get a clear picture of economic and workforce trends in up to four pilot regions of New York State. For the purposes of this application, the definition of a region is consistent with the definition provided by Empire State Development Corporation. For a map of the ESD Regions in New York State, see:

http://www.empire.state.ny.us/Regions_and_Counties/default.asp#.

Please describe how the applicant will specifically perform the following functions:

1. **Identify Businesses in Declining and Expanding Sectors of the Regional Economies** in up to four regions of New York State, including
 - Assembling economic forecasts of regional employment by industry from public and private sources.
 - Examining key occupations in declining and expanding sectors.
 - Work in coordination with the New York State Department of Labor's Research and Statistics Division; Empire State Development's New York State Data Center; The Federal Reserve Bank of New York; and the other members of a research advisory board.
2. **Conduct an In-depth Analysis of the Specific Economic Conditions in the Study Regions** that affect firms and establishments in both declining and expanding sectors.
3. **Conduct a Financial Analysis of Key Industries in the Regions** which should focus on the continued economic viability of the key industries, including
 - Examining industry-wide trends in technology and business strategies that may influence the location and investment decisions of firms with establishments or operations in the study regions.
 - Identifying the comparative advantage of expanding and declining industries in the study region vis-à-vis regions carrying out similar production activities, including comparative wage rates and other factors affecting labor supply.

4. **Conduct Focus Groups with Firms and Workers in Declining and Emerging Industries** to assess their vulnerability in light of:
 - the position of the firm/establishment in the industry value chain
 - The effect of emerging technology.
 - Their current perception of their comparative advantage and resulting business strategy.
 - Future skill needs.
 - Anticipated volume of labor force demand.

5. **Develop Three Products** to help the regions' leaders better understand trends affecting the outlook of their key industries. These products include:
 - alternative business strategies that might retain production in declining industries and encourage the growth of emerging industries in the study region;
 - a model for workforce forecasting that can be used to monitor change in a region's industries;
 - An assessment of the implications for training and workforce development activities in the study regions.

6. **Identify and Analyze New and More Timely Sources of Data** that can answer more detailed and timely questions about the character of industry cluster composition, risk and growth factors.

7. **Assist the Project in Developing a User Friendly Guide** in how to best interpret and use data regionally and locally.

8. **Make Data Analysis Techniques Available** to regional, county and local economic developers and Local Workforce Investment Boards.

9. **Assist in the development of community work teams**, and assist in the planning, preparation and implementation of community forums as needed

10. **Issue Periodic Research Reports** on regional findings on growth and at risk sectors identified to assist local decision makers in developing overall regional economic and workforce development strategies. Conduct regional presentations on findings and recommendations as requested by NYSAC.

11. **Identify the Skill Needs of Other Businesses** in the area (including the potential growth sectors.)

12. **Timeline:** of how and when activities will be conducted over the course of the contract.

Budget: Please provide a detailed, line item budget including all anticipated expenses based on the following contracting schedule, not to exceed \$186,000.00 for each year. The budget should include, if applicable, staff salaries and fringe benefits, contracted

services (including consulting costs if applicable); travel expenses, and other operating expenses. Overhead expenses for institutions of higher education should not exceed 18% which is the accepted state overhead rate.

Contracting Schedule: Contract amount will be pro-rated based on the following schedule.

Phase I: October 1, 2007 – December 31, 2007. Begin the economic analysis on the first region.

Phase II: January 1, 2008 – December 31, 2008 (Contingent on NYSAC's contract renewal with NYSDOL and receipt of sufficient funding for 2008.) Finish work on the first region, complete work on the second region, begin a third region.

Phase III: January 1, 2009 – December 31, 2009 (Contingent on NYSAC's contract renewal with NYSDOL and receipt of sufficient funding for 2009.) Complete the economic analysis of the third region, begin and complete work on the fourth region. Complete all work associated with the project.

Proposal Submissions: Proposals narratives should be no longer than 10 pages in length, not including a detailed, line item budget. (Staff resumes are not included in the 10 page limitation) Proposals should be submitted to:

Isabelle Andrews
Workforce Intelligence Project Director
New York State Association of Counties
111 Pine Street
Albany, NY 12207

Technical questions on this application should be submitted by e-mail to Isabelle Andrews at iandrews@nysac.org.

Proposals should be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on September 4, 2007. An electronic version of the proposal should also be submitted via e-mail to iandrews@nysac.org. Awards will be announced on September 14, 2007. Contract will commence on October 1, 2007.