

**Regional Entrepreneurial Collaborative
Request for Proposals
Virtual Bidders Conference
May 19, 2010
Questions & Answers**

Terminology:

- **DELEG/BWT: Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth**
- **GF/GP: General Fund/General Purpose**
- **MEDC: Michigan Economic Development Corporation**
- **NEI: New Economy Initiative**
- **NWLB: No Worker Left Behind**
- **OSMIS: One-Stop Management Information System**
- **REC: Regional Entrepreneurial Collaboratives**
- **RFP: Request for Proposal**
- **SBA: (United States) Small Business Association**
- **SBTDC: Small Business Technology & Development Center**
- **WIA: Workforce Investment Act**
- **WIRED: Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development**

Questions and Answers:

Question: Is the champion necessarily the applicant organization?

Answer: **No. The applicant and champion can be different individuals and/or organizations. The application includes separate champion and applicant sections for this reason.**

Question: What if there isn't an active Chamber of Commerce, but an active Downtown Development Authority?

Answer: **The lack of an active Chamber of Commerce will not be an issue. Each REC will be comprised of a different organizational makeup. Please articulate the lack of an active Chamber of Commerce in your proposal.**

Question: What specific gap are you intending to fill with REC's?

Answer: **The purpose of this RFP is to establish Regional Entrepreneurial Collaboratives that increase workforce and economic development through the preparation of entrepreneurs for business startups and the establishment of entrepreneurial support systems designed to foster the creation and growth of small business.**

Question: What if there is no SCORE in your region

Answer: **There are nine SCORE chapters in Michigan with satellite offices throughout the state. Entrepreneurs may contact any Michigan SCORE office for consultation services. (Contact information will be posted at www.michigan.gov/rsa as a separate document.) Entrepreneurs can also seek SCORE assistance on-line at www.score.org.**

Question: 1) can workforce areas extend across state line 2) can partners be from both states?

Answer: **For this particular initiative the DELEG/BWT is looking for regional collaboratives that are located within the State of Michigan.**

Question: Does a WIRED region fit the definition of a regional partnership?

Answer: **A WIRED region may meet the definition of a regional partnership if it meets the requirements outlined in the RFP.**

Question: Are you looking to fund areas that do not have Tech Town/NEI/MEDC projects already going on?

Answer: **DELEG/BWT is looking to fund collaboratives that meet a need that is not currently being met in the region.**

Question: If we would like to partner with another entity, how can we find out who from our region might be applying?

Answer: **It may not be possible for DELEG/BWT to know prior to the June 25, 2010 deadline which regions of the state are applying for a REC grant. As outlined in the Format and Submission section of the RFP, applicants are strongly encouraged to assess similar interests within their region prior to submitting an application. The required partners may have also been contacted by neighboring regions intending to submit an application.**

Question: Does "Social Entrepreneur" meet the definition of the targeted client for an REC?

Answer: **RECs are a NWLB strategy to create a culture of entrepreneurship in Michigan through workforce development, which in turn creates good jobs. If preparing and supporting social entrepreneurs through RECs promotes business start ups and creates good jobs per the definition of the RFP then yes, this target population can be included in the proposal.**

Question: What is the total REC funding available and how many RECs will be funded?

Answer: **A total of \$1 million is available for REC grants. DELEG/BWT foresees funding a number of proposals up to \$200,000 each. The grant funding amount is for use over an eighteen (18) month period.**

Question: Are RECs required to target only those entrepreneurs that are in MEDC's four Industry Sectors (i.e., Life Sciences, Homeland Security, Advanced Manufacturing, and Alternative Energy)?

Answer: **No. The REC initiative is intended to grow the workforce in any entrepreneurial area.**

Question: Will grant recipients act as a convener of the region's existing entrepreneurial services OR provide entrepreneurial services or both?

Answer: If a regional entrepreneurial service group or program already exists, the existing group or program could be or become the collaborative. If not, the existing entrepreneurial service group or program should partner with the newly formed REC.

Question: Are REC awards capacity building grants to develop or enhance a regional collaborative effort to create an entrepreneurial environment with a specific focus on the NWLB model?

Answer: Yes. REC grants can be used for capacity building. REC grants can serve as seed funding to begin a collaborative, or it can enhance an existing effort.

Question: What are acceptable "other expenses?"

Answer: "Other expenses" has been left undefined and will depend on each REC's specific circumstances. The "other" expenses should be outlined in the Budget Narrative as they apply to the collaborative and will be considered as part of the review process.

Question: Can grant funding be used to pay for entrepreneurs to receive training?

Answer: Yes. The budget and budget narrative should outline resources used to train entrepreneurs. Other funds may also be leveraged for entrepreneurial training activities.

Question: Is match funding required? If not, are bonus points awarded for match funding?

Answer: Leveraged funding is required, but a specific match is not. There are no bonus points for match funding. Proof of sustainability after the initial eighteen (18) month funding period is required, which may require leveraged funding.

Question: Is the source of REC funds federal dollars? If yes, from what federal department/agency?

Answer: The funds are NWLB-GFGP dollars.

Question: Are there any restraints on the scope of projects based on funding type? Any special types of reporting required like OSMIS?

Answer: As outlined in the RFP there will be a reporting element. DELEG/BWT will provide specific reporting information to REC grant recipients. Individuals trained through the collaboratives using REC funding must be tracked using OSMIS.

Question: Is there a discussion taking place in the state's K-12 system to allow for entrepreneurial training? Most systems find it difficult to allow for the required curriculum, let alone adding initiatives on which students are not "tested."

Answer: DELEG/BWT is not aware of any specific dialog in this respect. However, DELEG/BWT is aware of programs demonstrating an

entrepreneurial strategic alignment within local and regional K-12 systems being developed across the state.

Question: The SBTDC is funded by SBA. SBTDC clients sign confidentiality forms. How will participant reporting be measured since the SBTDC's cannot share their "clients served" database information, which is part of the required work plan?

Answer: **As outlined in the RFP's *Benchmarking and Reporting* section, the DELEG/BWT reporting measures sought are participant numbers (headcounts) and not personal and confidential client information. If contact with a REC entrepreneurial client is necessary for any reason (i.e. media success stories), DELEG/BWT will work with the specific REC to connect with and seek permission from the client.**

Question: Are those participating in training required to follow current NWLB eligibility guidelines?

Answer: **Yes. If the REC grant award is used for training, entrepreneurs entering training must meet and follow the NWLB guidelines:**

- **Any person who is unemployed**
- **Any person who has received notice of termination or layoff from employment**
- **Any employed person whose family income is \$40,000 or less**
- **Additional requirements apply to those 18-23 years of age**

Question: The initial notice indicated submission deadline of June 25. Which date is correct? Please clarify- is the submission deadline June 18 or June 25?

Answer: **The REC proposal submission deadline is Friday, June 25, 2010.**

Question: Does the submission deadline apply to both electronic and hard copies?

Answer: **Yes, it applies to both electronic and hard copies.**

Question: RECs only serve people who meet NWLB guidelines?

Answer: **No. Individuals trained using REC grant funds must meet NWLB guidelines.**

Question: By definition, using the NWLB criteria means RECs cannot work with existing manufacturers to instill "entrepreneurship" as a business recovery, diversification and development strategy - correct?

Answer: **Incorrect. If the REC grant award is used for training, entrepreneurs entering training must meet and follow the NWLB guidelines:**

- **Any person who is unemployed**
- **Any person who has received notice of termination or layoff from employment**
- **Any employed person whose family income is \$40,000 or less**
- **Additional requirements apply to those 18-23 years of age**

Question: Can there be a mix of NWLB eligible individuals and others in training who pays for it themselves?

Answer: **Yes. If that is the training model established by the collaborative.**

Question: Are there many NWLB participants who are trying to start their own business?

Answer: **DELEG/BWT does not have specific numbers, but is aware of NWLB participants pursuing entrepreneurial endeavors. DELEG/BWT is also aware of a concern about meeting WIA performance standards for entrepreneurs. Training delivered through RECs is exempt from meeting WIA performance goals.**

Question: Clarification -- only entrepreneurs who participate in training will be held to the NWLB eligibility guidelines, correct? The REC will still be able to "serve" an entrepreneur who does not meet the NWLB guidelines?

Answer: **Yes, this is correct.**

Question: Is this presentation being recorded and will it be available for another viewing?

Answer: **The presentation was recorded, but the audio version will not be available on-line. However, the questions and answers will be posted along with the PowerPoint on the Michigan Skills Alliance Web site, www.michigan.gov/rsa**

Question: Do the customers/clients served through this initiative need to be No Worker Left Behind eligible?

Answer: **No. The REC can assist non-NWLB entrepreneurs in various ways, which should be outlined in the proposal. If the REC grant award is used for training, entrepreneurs entering training must meet and follow the NWLB guidelines:**

- **Any person who is unemployed**
- **Any person who has received notice of termination or layoff from employment**
- **Any employed person whose family income is \$40,000 or less**
- **Additional requirements apply to those 18-23 years of age**

Question: Will the RECs be subject to Workforce Investment Act (WIA) performance standards?

Answer: **No. REC activities will not be subject to WIA performance standards. As outlined in the RFP's Benchmark and Reporting Section, monitored and reported performance measures are required and include:**

- **Number of organizational Regional Entrepreneurial Collaborative members**
- **Number of entrepreneurs/small businesses (fewer than 500 employees/\$7 million in revenue annually) within the defined collaborative region**

- **Number of entrepreneurs with existing businesses entering the system**
- **Number of potential entrepreneurs entering the system**
- **Number of services received by existing and potential entrepreneurs – and specific types of services provided/received**
- **Number of new businesses started by entrepreneurs served by the regional collaborative**

Question: How should a REC address the Project Manager's Resume/Curriculum Vitae for a yet-to-be created position to coordinate the area's entrepreneurial efforts?

Answer: **Describe the accomplishments, attributes, and background that the REC will seek in a Project Manager. In addition, list the REC's primary partner contacts and corresponding titles as the Project Manager's skills and knowledge-based resource support system.**

Question: How should indirect costs be addressed in the budget request?

Answer: **As outlined in the RFP's *Budget and Budget Narrative* section, the budget narrative should include an explanation of leveraged resources. In most cases, indirect costs will be included under "Other" in the Budget Summary – Attachment "A" expense category. A description of the leveraged resources should also be included in the *Leveraged Resources/Sustainability* section of the proposal.**

Question: Does a DELEG/BWT *Work Plan* template exist?

Answer: **No. In most cases, the *Work Plan* format will be dictated by the REC's program composition and element descriptions.**

Question: Will DELEG/BWT consider multiple proposals from the same region?

Answer: **As outlined in the RFP's *Format and Submission Requirements* section, applications that are duplicative of each other within a region may result in a request for a revised combined application. Applicants are therefore strongly encouraged to assess similar interests in their region prior to submitting an application and, where possible, to jointly submit a proposal.**

Question: Will proposals funding the expansion of existing RECs be considered?

Answer: **Yes. The REC initiative was designed to assist existing programs, expand their capacity as well as support the creation of RECs throughout Michigan.**