

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA)**

**Q:** What is the NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA)?

**A:** As part of the Governor's Regional Economic Development Council initiative, the CFA is a modern and easy-to-use online application for accessing state resources currently available from multiple New York State agencies and authorities. The CFA allows applicants to access multiple State funding sources through one application. Application materials can be accessed through <http://nyworks.ny.gov>.

**Q:** Why should a grant applicant apply for funding through the CFA process?

**A:** The CFA is a more efficient and effective process for applicants to access economic and community development funding. Prior to 2011, applicants had to navigate multiple agencies and applications without any mechanism for coordination. Under this process, the CFA serves as the single entry point for access to economic and community development funding. A CFA can be submitted for single or multiple sources of funding through one application, making it quicker and easier for economic development projects to receive funding.

**Q:** Who submits a CFA?

**A:** An applicant can submit the CFA via a secure, web-based application for the following projects:

- Direct Assistance to Businesses
- Community Development
- Agricultural Economic Development
- Waterfront Revitalization
- Energy Improvements
- Environmental Improvements
- Sustainability
- Workforce Development
- Low-Cost Financing

**Q:** Which agencies offer funding through the CFA?

**A:** Twelve State agencies have made funding available through the CFA process, including: Empire State Development; NYS Canal Corporation; Energy Research and Development Authority; Environmental Facilities Corporation; Homes and Community Renewal; New York Power Authority; Department of Labor; Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation;

Department of State; Department of Environmental Conservation; Department of Agriculture and Markets; and the Council on the Arts.

**Q:** What resources are available through the CFA?

**A:** Up to \$750 million in State resources will be accessible through the CFA to support the implementation of the priorities identified in each of the Regional Councils' strategic plans.

Approximate resources currently available through the Consolidated Funding Application process include:

Direct Assistance to Businesses up to \$247 million

**Empire State Development**

- up to \$ 150 million for Regional Council Capital Fund
- up to \$ 70 million for Excelsior Jobs Tax Credits
- up to \$ 20 million for Empire State Economic Development Fund
- up to \$ 4 million for Urban and Community Development Program
- up to \$ 3 million for Regional Tourism Marketing Grant Initiative (I LOVE NY Fund)

Community Development up to \$61.2 million

**Homes and Community Renewal**

- up to \$ 28 million for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding
- up to \$ 5.2 million for the New York Main Street Program
- up to \$ 4 million for Urban Initiatives Program
- up to \$ 4 million for Rural Area Revitalization Projects

**Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation**

- up to \$ 16 million for Municipal Parks, Historic Preservation, and Heritage Area Projects

**Council on the Arts**

- up to \$ 4 million for New York State Council on the Arts Grant Program

Agricultural Economic Development up to \$3 million

**Agriculture and Markets**

- up to \$ 3 million for Agriculture Development Program

Waterfront Revitalization up to \$16 million

**Department of State**

- up to \$ 15 million for Local Waterfront Revitalization

**Canal Corporation**

- up to \$ 1 million for the Canalway Grants Program

Environmental Improvements up to \$3 million+

**Environmental Facilities Corporation**

- \$ TBD million for Green In0.025 innovation Grant Program

### Department of Environmental Conservation

- up to \$ 2 million for Clean Water State Revolving Fund Engineering Planning Grant Program

### Empire State Development

- up to \$ 1 million for Environmental Investment Fund

Energy Improvements up to \$50 million

### Energy Research and Development Authority

- up to \$ 50 million for Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Projects & Programs

### New York Power Authority

- up to 910 Mega Watts for ReCharge New York

Sustainability up to \$12 million

### Energy Research and Development Authority

- up to \$12 million for Regional Economic Development and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program

Workforce Development up to \$5 million

### Department of Labor

- up to \$ 5 million for Workforce Investment Act-related training and workforce development activities

Low-Cost Financing up to \$350 million

- up to \$ 350 million for tax-exempt bonds for private projects with a public purpose

**Q:** Where can an applicant find guidance on applying for specific funding programs?

A: On the CFA home page, several documents are posted detailing how to use the CFA and outlining the available CFA resources. These documents provide applicants with information about the application as well as programmatic detail for each resource that is a part of the CFA process.

**Q:** What is a “token”?

A: A token is what applicants use as their password for the CFA system.

**Q:** How do I get a token?

A; After clicking “Register Now” at <https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/register.cfm>, you will be asked for your email address, organization name and project alias name. After filling in this required information and answering the security question (ex. 3+5= ) your token will be displayed on the screen. Print or note your token somewhere safe as you will need it to sign in and access your project later.

**Q:** I have registered and have a token, now what? How do I activate my account?

A: After you register, you will receive an email from [cfa@ny.gov](mailto:cfa@ny.gov). It will contain your application number and a link to activate your account. You should save a copy of this email and keep it with your sign in information. When you click on the activation link, in your email, a registration confirmation will open up in your browser. To enter your application, click on the login button and enter your email address and token number.

**Q:** Is the CFA system any different this round?

A: Yes. Many changes have been made to make navigating through the process of filling out an application easier. It is now easier for applicants to go back to questions already answered. Additionally, information is saved more frequent and applicants have the ability to directly upload attachments into the system.

**Q:** I submitted an application last round. Can I still access that application?

A: Yes. You can access your application from the first round by logging in using the token assigned to you during the first round. If you have lost or forgotten your token, you can retrieve it by calling the Customer Care Center at 518-474-4487. Please note that you can only view and/or print your old application. You must fill out a new, Round Two application to be eligible for the current round.

**Q:** Can I register more than one project on the same application?

A: No. You will need to register each project separately and obtain a new token and application number for each project.

**Q:** How are you encouraging participation by likely applicants?

A: To maximize participation in the process and ensure high-quality applications, over 30 public workshops will be held to explain the programs and eligibility standards, as well as improvements to the application process.

**Q:** How is a project submitted to the Regional Council for consideration and review?

A: Any project may be submitted for consideration through the CFA (by clicking the Consolidated Funding Application tab at: <http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/>). The project will be submitted to the appropriate work group for review and recommendation by the full Council. The Application will be forwarded to the appropriate agency for technical review and scoring.

**Q:** If applicants have additional questions about the CFA or would like to request assistance with the application who do they contact?

A: These applicants should reach out directly to their Regional Council through the

appropriate email address below. A staff person from the Regional Council can help an applicant apply. For additional questions related to the application, the applicant should reach out through the same email address.

Capital Region:	<a href="mailto:CFARegion1@ny.gov">CFARegion1@ny.gov</a>
Central New York:	<a href="mailto:CFARegion2@ny.gov">CFARegion2@ny.gov</a>
Finger Lakes:	<a href="mailto:CFARegion3@ny.gov">CFARegion3@ny.gov</a>
Long Island:	<a href="mailto:CFARegion4@ny.gov">CFARegion4@ny.gov</a>
Mid-Hudson:	<a href="mailto:CFARegion5@ny.gov">CFARegion5@ny.gov</a>
Mohawk Valley:	<a href="mailto:CFARegion6@ny.gov">CFARegion6@ny.gov</a>
New York City:	<a href="mailto:CFARegion7@ny.gov">CFARegion7@ny.gov</a>
North Country:	<a href="mailto:CFARegion8@ny.gov">CFARegion8@ny.gov</a>
Southern Tier:	<a href="mailto:CFARegion9@ny.gov">CFARegion9@ny.gov</a>
Western New York	<a href="mailto:CFARegion10@ny.gov">CFARegion10@ny.gov</a>

**Q:** What if a project is eligible for funding that is not accessible through the CFA process? How do Regional Councils support applicants in obtaining these resources?

**A:** Regional Councils are about making State government work better for businesses to create an environment that will put New Yorkers back to work. Each Regional Council is staffed by representatives from a broad spectrum of State agencies who will help identify priority projects and potential funding sources within their agencies and then directly assist applicants throughout every step of the process.

If a project is not eligible for funding through the CFA process, contact your Regional Office through the email listed in the previous question. State agency staff will work with the Regional Council to identify potential funding sources and/or assistance when a non-eligible project is deemed a priority,

**Q:** What is the CFA timeline and how does it relate to the work of the Regional Councils?

**A:** The CFA solicitation will be open for 70 days – from May 3 until the application due date of 4:00PM July 16. Final attachments related to program specific requirements should be uploaded on the system; where hardcopies are specifically required by a funding agency, they are due by 4:00PM July 23. Scoring by the appropriate Regional Councils and agencies is expected to be finalized by the end of August.

NYSERDA will continue to accept applications to its open enrollment programs until all funds have been exhausted.

**Q:** What happens to the application once it is submitted?

**A:** Once the CFA is submitted by the applicant, it is reviewed and ranked by the appropriate Regional Council(s) in relation to how it will assist in implementing the strategic plan. The agencies that administer the program will exercise due diligence to determine relevant legal issues and potential disqualifying concerns, and assign a technical score to the CFA.

**Q:** How will the agencies score the CFAs?

**A:** The agencies fill out their own score sheets and assign points to eligible projects using criteria contained in the Available CFA Resources document. The score sheet incorporates the individual program's technical scoring requirements based on the program requirements. The agency's technical score, worth up to 80% of the total score, will be combined with the Regional Council scoring of up to 20% of the total score.

**Q:** How will the Regional Councils endorsement standards relate to regional strategic plans?

**A:** Each Regional Council will assign a score for CFA projects based on the degree to which the application implements the regional strategic plan, as follows:

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

**Q:** What happens when a project crosses two or more Regional Economic Development Councils?

**A:** Each Council will score the application and the average score will be used.

**Q:** Can applicants reapply for funding of projects that were not successful applications in 2011?

**A:** Applicants can reapply for funding for projects not funded in 2011. Applicants are encouraged to consult their Regional Council strategic plan to enhance project proposals to best implement the Regional Council strategic plan.

## **Regional Councils**

**Q:** How were regional boundaries drawn?

A: Regional boundaries are based on existing Empire State Development and Department of Labor regional boundaries. This allows the Councils to maximize efficiency and capitalize on existing programs, synergies and relationships.

**Q:** Will there be bipartisan representation on the Regional Council?

A: Members are selected based on their leadership role in the region, not their political affiliation.

**Q:** What role does higher education play in the Regional Councils?

A: Public and private higher education institutions are essential components of the State's economic engine, serving as centers of innovation and research, teaching the business leaders of tomorrow, anchoring our communities, and creating jobs. One Co-Chair from each Regional Council is a member of academia. In addition, each Regional Council includes members affiliated with higher education institutions located within that region and meetings are held at institutions of higher education.

**Q:** What staff support from State agencies is available to the Regional Councils?

A: Empire State Development (ESD) serves as the lead agency managing the Regional Councils. ESD Regional Directors act as the executive directors of each Regional Council, and regional ESD offices provide administrative and research support. The Department of State Strategic Planners are leading interagency teams which are helping the Regional Councils implement their strategic economic development plans. Other State agencies, authorities and departments are active participants on the Councils and provide necessary resources. In addition, academic institutions, think tanks and other independent organizations are invited by the Regional Councils, as appropriate, to contribute to the development of the Strategic Plans.

**Q:** What role do elected officials have in the Regional Councils?

A: The Regional Councils include an appointee by NYS Assembly Speaker and Senate Majority Leader of one voting member to every Regional Council. On Long Island, the membership includes the chief executive of each county and the chief executive of the two largest towns within each county. In New York City, membership includes one representative appointed by the Mayor of the City of New York and the borough president of each county. In every other region, membership includes the chief executive or supervisor of each county, and the chief executive or supervisor of the three municipalities with the largest population, with a limit of one municipal representative per county. These elected officials act in an advisory capacity and participate in discussions and the planning process.

**Q:** How will Regional Council members avoid conflicts of interest?

A: To ensure transparency and accountability, a Code of Conduct was established to ensure there are no real or perceived conflicts of interest that would interfere with any member acting in the best interest of all New Yorkers. In addition, members are required to participate in ethics training and recuse themselves from deliberations regarding any project or matter which poses an actual or potential conflict.

**Q:** Who will participate in the Statewide Chairman's Committee?

A: The Lieutenant Governor convenes the Statewide Chairman's Committee to advise the Governor on economic issues that affect multiple regions, identify barriers to economic growth common across regions, counsel how statewide assistance programs can be aligned with Regional Councils' strategic plans, and strengthen communications between the State and the Regional Councils. The Chairman's Committee includes statewide stakeholders and the Co-Chairs from each Regional Council.

**Q:** Will members be compensated for their time or receive any extra benefits?

A: No, Regional Council members serve at will and pro bono to ensure all members are working only in the best interest of their regions.

**Q:** Can additional members be added to a Regional Council?

A: The Regional Councils' initial membership has been selected based on a process that has now come to a close. As vacancies arise, they will be filled by the Governor's office in consultation with the Regional Council Co-Chairs from the corresponding region.

Work groups played an active role in the development of the Strategic Plans and will provide opportunities for substantive involvement in the Councils by other stakeholders in the region.

**Q:** How much will Regional Councils cost taxpayers?

A: Regional Councils are supported by existing resources and personnel that are currently dedicated to economic development efforts. By marshaling the State's existing resources, the Regional Councils actually maximize taxpayer money by streamlining and coordinating the economic development and planning process, cutting waste, and reducing duplication.

## **Regional Competition**

**Q:** Will the Regional Councils receive assistance in advancing their strategic plan?

A: There will be State agency staff assigned and available to assist the Regional Councils throughout the process. For instance, Regional Councils might consider how best to involve the State Agency Resource Teams with implementation of the strategies, raise public awareness of their plans, engage the public in implementation and ensure a process is in place to measure performance.



State agencies will be expected to join the Regional Councils in their work to grow New York's economy by undertaking four primary tasks:

- Align State programs with Regional Council priorities
- Eliminate impediments to economic growth
- Provide technical assistance
- Share information to replicate success

**Q:** What type of funding will be available to help Regional Councils implement their strategic plans?

**A:** To encourage the implementation of the Regional Economic Development Councils' strategic plans and to continue to motivate investment opportunities and job creation, the Regional Councils will compete in 2012 for up to \$150 million in capital funds and \$70 million in Excelsior tax credits for projects identified by the Regional Councils as priorities in their region.

Five awards of \$25 million will be made. The competition will be split in two parts:

- First, the four regions with the 2011 Best Plans will compete for two awards of up to \$25 million each in capital funds. Awards will be made based on the progress the Regional Councils have made implementing their strategies and evolution of their strategic plans.
- Second, the remaining six regions will compete for three awards of up to \$25 million each in capital funds. Awards will be made based on the regions' revised and updated strategic plans and progress made implementing their strategies.

The balance of the \$25 million in capital funds will be divided among the regions. Each region will also be eligible for up to \$10 million in Excelsior Tax Credits to help attract and grow business in the region.

**Q:** What happens after the second round of allocations is made – will there be further contests for funding or will allocations be based on the Strategic Plan and project priorities?

**A:** There will be ongoing opportunities for the Regional Councils to identify priority projects and apply for future State funding on an expedited basis.

### **Citizen Participation**

**Q:** How will the Regional Councils maintain transparency? Are meetings open to the public?

**A:** To ensure a transparent process, Regional Councils will host public sessions. Regional Councils are also encouraged to design innovative ways for stakeholders and the public to actively participate in the planning process. Meeting dates and locations will be available online. In addition, Strategic Plans and progress reports will be posted on [www.nyworks.ny.gov](http://www.nyworks.ny.gov).

**Q:** Where can I find membership and contact information for my Regional Council?

**A:** All information about the Regional Councils can be found at [www.nyworks.ny.gov](http://www.nyworks.ny.gov).

## **Executive Involvement**

**Q:** What is Governor Cuomo's role in the Regional Councils?

**A:** Economic development is a top priority of Governor Cuomo's administration, and the Regional Councils are the cornerstone of his economic development agenda. Governor Cuomo and Lieutenant Governor Duffy guide the Regional Council program to achieve economic growth, create jobs, and reinforce the message that New York State is Open For Business.

**Q:** What is Lieutenant Governor Duffy's role in the Regional Councils?

**A:** Economic development efforts are more likely to succeed when championed by a prominent leader. Lieutenant Governor Duffy is a former Upstate Mayor with a record of improving the Rochester and Western New York economy. He chairs each Regional Council and convenes a statewide Chairman's Committee to address issues that affect multiple regions.

**Q:** How will conflicts between regions be resolved?

**A:** Inter-regional or statewide conflicts will be resolved by the Chairman's Committee, led by the Lieutenant Governor. In general, the Chairman's Committee will address issues that affect multiple regions, such as barriers to economic growth, and facilitate communication between the State and the Councils.

**Q:** What will the role of Regional Councils be in relation to the Chairman's Committee?

**A:** The statewide Chairman's Committee will include the Co-Chairs of each Regional Council, who can provide information and feedback from the regions directly to the leaders of State agencies – problems and opportunities will be identified and can be acted upon quickly because of greater communication channels and the State's commitment to addressing regional needs.

## **Resource Allocation**

**Q:** Will the Regional Councils be disbursing funds directly?

A: No. The Regional Council will play an advisory role by undertaking four primary activities this year:

- Establish the framework needed to advance Regional Strategic Plans developed last year.
- Implement the Strategies, refining and adding detail, as needed, to the existing Implementation Agenda for strategies to be addressed from 2012 through 2013.
- Create a project pipeline and make recommendations on CFA funding.
- Provide a Progress Report documenting success the Council is achieving in implementing its strategic plan.

**Q:** Who decides how resources are allocated?

A: For the competitive funding, State agencies will continue to make exercise discretion and make all final decisions, through a review committee, about how resources are allocated.

In addition to the up to \$750 million in competitive grants and tax credits through the CFA process, funding has been allocated to encourage the implementation of the Regional Economic Development Councils' strategic plans and to continue to motivate investment opportunities and job creation. The Regional Councils will compete in 2012 for up to \$150 million in capital funds and \$70 million in Excelsior Tax Credits for projects identified by the Regional Councils as priorities in their regions.

Five awards of \$25 million will be made. The competition will be split in two parts:

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The balance of the \$25 million in capital funds will be divided among the regions. Each region will also be eligible for up to \$10 million in Excelsior Tax Credits to help attract and grow business in the region.

**Q:** What kind of projects might the Councils identify and prioritize?

The Regional Council program recognizes that no two regions are identical – and that no one knows their regions better than the people who live there. Strengths, assets and priorities vary from region to region, and the projects identified by each region will vary accordingly. Each Regional Council will conduct a community-based process to identify regionally significant priority projects that align with the Region's strategic plan.

### **Continuous Review & Reporting Requirements**

**Q:** How will the progress and success of Regional Councils be measured and reported?

A: In September 2012, each Regional Council will report on progress made implementing its strategic plan. This report should describe the significant accomplishments the Regional Council has made advancing its strategies through the actions it has taken.

By examining and reporting on progress on the Implementation Agenda, a Regional Council will be able to determine whether its plan is having the desired effect, and whether it needs to modify its strategies to better achieve its vision.

**Q:** How will the State measure the overall success of the regional approach?

A: Governor Cuomo is focused on performance and results. To ensure that the Councils are successful in spurring economic growth, performance measurement will be a key component of the Regional Councils program. Important measures of success will be jobs created, amount of new investment, and other economic indicators. Statewide, the success of the regional approach will be measured by improvement in the business climate and overall economy.

## **Regional Planning**

**Q:** Are the Regional Councils another layer of government? Won't they make it more difficult to conduct business in New York State?

A: To the contrary, Regional Councils make it easier to conduct business in New York State by serving as a single point of contact to help businesses navigate State government regulations and resources. Regional Councils also work with businesses and State agencies to identify and mitigate regulatory burdens that impede economic growth.

**Q:** How is the regional approach better than the current approach?

A: The Regional Council approach is a fundamental departure from New York's traditional economic development approach, which has been top-down and State-directed. The Governor's vision is that the State will rely on regional expertise to identify and prioritize significant projects that would maximize the State's return on investment.

**Q:** This sounds like it will take a long time to bear fruit. We need jobs now. How will the Regional Councils help in the short-term?

A: By empowering those who know their regions best, the Regional Councils identify opportunities and projects that are best positioned to create jobs now. The expedited review at the state level ensures these opportunities and projects are advanced as quickly as possible to yield returns in the short-term, while laying groundwork for growth in the long-term. The statewide Chairman's Committee provides an opportunity for the Regional Co-Chairs of each Regional Council to provide information and feedback from the regions directly to the leaders of State agencies – problems and opportunities are identified and can be acted upon quickly because of greater communication channels and the State's commitment to addressing regional needs.

