

AT A GLANCE: REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS

What Are Regional Economic Development Councils?

In July 2011, Governor Cuomo created **Regional Economic Development Councils** across the state to spur private-sector investment and job creation, and to better coordinate existing economic development efforts. The Regional Councils will help guide the allocation of grants and subsidies by crafting long-term strategic plans for each region and recommending projects to several state agencies with economic development functions.

A guidebook released in mid-July outlined operations plans for the Regional Councils. Details include:

- **10 Regional Councils** follow NYS DOL boundaries: Western NY, Finger Lakes, Southern Tier, Central NY, Mohawk Valley, North Country, Capital Region, Mid-Hudson, New York City, and Long Island.
- All Regional Councils are chaired by Lt. Governor Duffy and have two Vice-Chairs, one from business and from academia. Each Regional Council consists of about 20 members, with generally one labor and one community representative. **Appointments** can be found at <http://nyworks.ny.gov/>. Regional Councils are staffed by Empire State Development.
- Regional Councils will create **5-year strategic plans** that lay out a vision and strategies for economic development in each region and identify important projects to receive immediate funding. Regional Councils will decide on their own performance metrics and provide an annual progress report.
- Regional Councils are functioning on an accelerated timeline: Plans will be submitted to a yet-to-be-named Strategic Plan Review Committee by **November 14th, 2011**, with winning plans and projects identified in December 2011. Regional Council Members will meet a total of six times from early August to early November (Dates below).
- A statewide **Chairman’s Committee** is tasked with resolving inter-regional conflicts and identifying and eliminating “barriers to growth” statewide. It is made up of the Vice Chairs from each Council, statewide stakeholders, and state agency and authority heads.
- **Strategic Plan Review Committee** members will be appointed to the Governor and Lt. Governor and consist of leaders from “independent, non-partisan and widely respected public policy, economic development, academic, and other organizations.”



REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING DATES						
Regional Council	1st Meeting Aug. 3-11	2nd Meeting Aug. 16-24	3rd Meeting Sept. 6-14	4th Meeting Sept. 26-Oct. 5	5th Meeting Oct. 18-26	6th Meeting Nov. 1-9
Western NY	Wed. 8/3, 10am	Tue. 8/16, 10am	Tue. 9/6, 10am	Mon. 10/3, 10am	Tue. 10/18, 10am	Tue. 11/1, 10am
Finger Lakes	Wed. 8/3, 3pm	Tue. 8/16, 3pm	Tue. 9/6, 3pm	Mon. 10/3, 3pm	Tue. 10/18, 3pm	Tue. 11/1, 3pm
Central NY	Thu. 8/4, 9:30am	Wed. 8/17, 9:30am	Wed. 9/7, 9:30am	Mon. 9/26, 11am	Wed. 10/19, 9:30am	Wed. 11/2, 9:30am
Southern Tier	Thu. 8/4, 3pm	Wed. 8/17, 3pm	Wed. 9/7, 3pm	Wed. 9/28, 3pm	Wed. 10/19, 3pm	Wed. 11/2, 3pm
Capital Region	Tues. 8/9, 9:30am	Thu. 8/18, 9:30am	Thu. 9/8, 9:30am	Thu. 9/29, 9:30am	Thu. 10/20, 9:30am	Wed. 11/3, 9:30am
Mid-Hudson	Tue. 8/9, 3pm	Thu. 8/18, 3pm	Thu. 9/8, 3pm	Thu. 9/29, 3pm	Thu. 10/20, 3pm	Wed. 11/3, 3pm
North Country	Fri. 8/5, 11am	Fri. 8/19, 11am	Fri. 9/9, 11am	Fri. 9/30, 11am	Fri. 10/21, 11am	Fri. 11/4, 11am
NYC	Wed. 8/10, 8:30am	Tue. 8/23, 9:30am	Tue. 9/13, 9:30am	Tue. 10/4, 9:30am	Tue. 10/25, 9:30am	Tue. 11/8, 9:30am
Long Island	Wed. 8/10, 3pm	Tue. 8/23, 3pm	Tue. 9/13, 3pm	Tue. 10/4, 3pm	Tue. 10/25, 3pm	Tue. 11/8, 3pm
Mohawk Valley	Thu. 8/11, 11am	Wed. 8/24, 11am	Wed. 9/14, 11am	Wed. 10/5, 11am	Wed. 10/26, 11am	Wed. 11/9, 11am

What Money Are Regional Councils Competing For?

NYS Consolidated Funding Application	
Agency	Total grants, credits, and other resources (in millions)
Empire State Development	\$270
NYSERDA	\$175
HCR	\$169
Department of Transportation	\$50
Environmental Facilities Corp.	\$20
Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation	\$13
Department of State	\$10
Department of Labor	\$3
NYS Canal Corporation	\$1.5
Private Activity Bond Cap	\$350
Potential Resources Available	\$1 Billion+
Additional Resources Available	
Recharge NY	910 Mega Watts

Regional Councils will compete for **\$200 million: \$130 in capital funds and \$70 million in Excelsior Jobs Program tax credits**. The four regions with the best strategic plans will receive \$40 million each (\$25 million in capital fund money and \$15 million in tax credits). The rest will be divided among the remaining 6 regions.

In addition, Regional Councils will be able to apply for an additional **\$800 million from existing state agency programs** through a new **Consolidated Funding Application** process for projects that align with strategies identified in their strategic plans. Projects endorsed by the Regional Councils will still need to meet pre-existing program requirements to receive funding, but will be subject to a streamlined application review process conducted by the administering state agencies.

Opportunities for Public Participation

Most Regional Council meetings will include a section open to the public. Additionally, each Regional Council is establishing its own public participation process consisting of public forums, hearings, and online public surveys. Dates have been set for some Regional Councils' public meetings, with the first round occurring from **late-August to mid-September**.

Each Regional Council has also created **Work Groups** made up of subsets of Council Members to focus on particular issues and meet separately from Council meetings. Council Members can invite **additional stakeholders** to participate in the Work Groups at their discretion.

A Pivotal Moment for Good Job Creation and Economic Development in New York

Regional Councils provide a unique opportunity for community and labor to advocate for economic development that creates quality jobs, increases opportunity for local communities, and makes our environment more sustainable. To that end, regional **strategic plans must prioritize economic, social, and environmental sustainability**.

Key NYS Development Programs	Annual Cost
Industrial Development Agencies (IDAs)	\$645 million (2008)
Brownfield Cleanup Program	\$624 million (2010)
Empire Zone Program	\$668 million (2007)
Excelsior Jobs Program	\$70 million (2011)
Empire State Film Production Credit	\$123 million (2010)

Governor Cuomo recognizes the need to overhaul NY's economic development system, but we believe a regional approach is only part of the solution. If Regional Councils are truly to become a one stop shop for all economic development dollars, they should tackle longstanding challenges with **the \$8.2 billion we spend annually in business tax breaks** through back-door, off-budget entities like IDAs and others. **Regional Councils must adopt basic criteria of success based on the principles of performance standards, accountability, and transparency**. Without **job quality standards**, New York will continue to subsidize poverty wage jobs that require social safety net programs. Without **environmental standards**, we will invest in sprawl and inefficient buildings that increase harmful emissions. And without **transparency and accountability**, we will continue to squander millions of tax dollars on businesses that do not meet their promised development goals.

Regional Councils provide an opportunity to move away from the mistakes of the past and **more effectively use public investments to create good jobs. The opportunity for us to weigh in is now.**

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