

RFQ for NORTHEAST REGIONAL PLANNING SERVICES

Governor Baker has created a Workforce Skills Cabinet—Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Rosalin Acosta, Education Secretary James Peyser; and Housing and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash---to strengthen the pipeline to employment. They are seeking to build collaborative solutions by aligning economic, workforce, and education systems in Massachusetts with the skill needs of regional economies. The regional planning process will bring together regional partners to collectively determine high priority regional career pathways and to craft collaborative solutions to meet the Commonwealth’s jobseeker and employer needs.

The planning process for the Northeast Region is led by three workforce boards—the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board, the Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board, and the North Shore Workforce Investment Board. Up to \$27,500 is available to pay for support of the regional planning activity. The boards are seeking an organization or a collaboration of individuals to provide support, including:

- Plan, with the workforce boards, two to three sessions (September, November, and if needed December) to explore the Northeast labor market and identify areas where the demand for labor exceeds the supply. Research staff from the workforce boards will provide labor market analysis to guide these discussions. (Please note that two such sessions convened by the workforce boards and EOLWD prior to the eventual award of this contract.)
- Facilitate the discussion of workforce development professionals, educators, businesses, and community organizations in the three regional planning sessions leading to an agreement about the labor market gap or gaps the participants will address over the next several years
- Produce a regional labor market blueprint/plan by the end of December 2017 that includes the following:
 - An Executive Summary
 - A description of process, methods and sources used to gather data
 - A description of key industries and occupations in the Northeast based on the report, produced by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and analysis conducted by the workforce boards.
 - A review of existing regional partnerships with business, educators, job seekers and other partners, and their successes and challenges. Identification of gaps in the labor supply that impede productivity and growth.
 - The gap(s) that will be the focus of the regional plan, the reasons why the gap(s) was selected, and strategies for growing the pipeline to fill the gaps. The strategies should include descriptions of education/ career pathways for the targeted occupations/ industries. In addition, current regional transportation patterns, their development, and recommendations for the future will be outlined in the context of regional employer and job seeker economic development needs.

- Examination of hiring processes of Northeast companies, for example general expectations of entry, mid, and higher level employees, screening mechanisms, and general employment expectations.
- Recommendations for the region – including Workforce Development, Economic Development and Education
- The role and responsibilities, moving forward, of each of the regional planning members.

The three workforce boards will provide assistance to this process through additional labor market research and analysis, outreach to businesses within the three regions for real-time data, and editing/proofreading of the final document.

Minimum Qualifications:

Experience/expertise in one or more areas – Workforce Development, Education, or Economic Development

For consideration, please submit:

- A cover sheet listing the organization and the name, phone and email of the lead on the project;
- A work plan for completing the project;
- A description of your qualifications for this project including a description of two similar projects completed by the organization and two references with contact information

The deadline for submission is August 16, 2017

Please submit the application by email to David McDonald at dmcdonald@northshorewib.com

Questions should be emailed to Mary Sarris at msarris@northshorewib.com .