

## **RFP 4630 Regional Clean Energy Hub Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. How are we defining clean energy?**

In the context of this initiative, clean energy refers to distributed energy resources such as energy efficiency, renewables and storage. NYSERDA anticipates that Regional Clean Energy Hubs will advance access to clean energy solutions for residents and support efforts to position communities to benefit from clean energy solutions and initiatives.

### **2. What happens if NYSERDA doesn't get proposals for a specific region/area? Or if proposals are not awarded?**

If proposals are not submitted or awarded for a specific region, NYSERDA may either resolicit for services in the region or explore the potential to contract with another Hub to provide services in the region in question. A selected Proposer is not obligated to provide services in additional Regions unless agreed to by the Proposer.

### **3. NYC is made up of five (5) boroughs and will not breakdown cleanly into three regions, how will proposers from NYC ensure that all regions are being covered, or will NYSERDA define the NYC regions based on the solicitations that they receive?**

The New York City Hubs will be determined based on the proposals received. If there is a gap identified, NYSERDA may resolicit proposals for the region.

### **4. If NYSERDA decides to re-solicit NYC, will that require rejecting the solicitations received? Will that require proposers to re-submit applications?**

See question #2 related to regional coverage.

### **5. How is community-based organization defined for this RFP?**

For purposes of this initiative, a community-based organization refers to a public or private organization aimed at making desired improvements to a community's social health, well-being, and overall functioning, and is representative of a community or significant segments of a community; and provides services to individuals in the community based on input from community members.

### **6. Would a university or educational entity be considered a "community-based organization"?**

Yes. Educational institutions would be considered a community-based organization.

### **7. Do Governmental Organizations/Entities qualify for this proposal?**

Local governmental entities are not excluded from proposing or teaming to provide services through the solicitation; however, federal or state governmental entities do not qualify as they do not meet the definition of a community-based organization for purposes of this solicitation. The proposal must demonstrate the capacity to provide coverage across the entire region as well as the range of services outlined in the RFP. Proposals that include a governmental entity must still include community-based organization as the prime contractor and in a lead role.

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### **8. How does a proposer demonstrate that they are an active community-based organization or are working with an active community-based organization?**

A proposer must demonstrate experience of the team through existing services provided to disadvantaged communities. This could be demonstrated several ways such as through resumes, references, experience, qualifications, and outlining of expertise of each team member in the proposal.

### **9. Will RFP 4630 be conforming to Article 15-A [of the Executive Law]? And if so, where is that information in the RFP? Clarify, the definition of state contract and why MWBE goals are not appropriate?**

The question inquires whether Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) goals will attach to contracts awarded under this RFP. Article 15-A does not apply to this solicitation, as the resulting contracts will not be state contracts pursuant to Article 15-A requirements, which apply to contracts seeking the procurement of goods and services for the operations of a New York State entity. NYSERDA is in compliance with all applicable 15-A requirements, including growth plans and increased outreach. In addition, NYSERDA's efforts to build an inclusive clean energy economy extend beyond business ownership and into the makeup of the workforce at large, to ensure equitable access to the full suite of career pathways and economic opportunities related to clean energy employment – and with a focus on Disadvantaged Communities.

While MWBE goals are not mandatory, we encourage and welcome MWBE firms to propose into the solicitation and encourage the inclusion of MWBE firms on the proposing team.

### **10. Does NYSERDA maintain a list of partners in each region that potential proposers can review to see what organizations they can work with as part of a Hub?**

NYSERDA created the [web-based Clearinghouse](#) for the Regional Clean Energy Hub solicitation as a resource for potential proposers. Completing the Statement of Interest form for the Clearinghouse does not guarantee a selection as part of a team and selections are up to the individual proposers.

### **11. If my organization wants to propose, can we reach out to the Clearinghouse organizations?**

Yes. The Clearinghouse is provided as a resource for potential proposers to identify teaming arrangements.

### **12. What is the process to join the clearinghouse?**

Organizations interested in teaming with a Hub should complete the [Statement of Interest form](#) on NYSERDA's webpage to have their information posted to the Clearinghouse.

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**13. If we are interested in applying to the RFP, do we add ourselves to the clearinghouse?**

Clearinghouse participation is not mandatory but is offered to provide teaming opportunities.

**14. The regions are comprised of multiple counties. Will there be more than one hub in each region?**

Per the December 2021 RFP revision, there will be one Hub per region, with the exception of New York City where up to three (3) hubs may be awarded. Proposing teams should outline a structure (e.g., hub and spoke, satellite) for providing coverage of the entire region, including through the establishment of partnerships with organizations throughout the region.

**15. Why Time and Materials contracts?**

The Hub agreements will have a hybrid of time and materials and milestone-based reimbursement structure, with an initial 10% startup payment of the total budget upon contract execution, the Local Project Support and Community Campaign funds of \$300,000 and \$250,00 respectively, over four (4) years are milestone based. Time and Materials contracts pay for actual hours and materials spent on specific activities outlined in the Statement of Work, whereas milestone-based contracts only provide payment for achievement of specific milestones upon completion. Time and materials contracts are used where the exact time needed and costs for the work is not entirely predictable, as is the case here in certain elements of the work. The initial 10% startup funding is intended to provide Hubs with starting capital to fund work completed prior to the first invoice.

**16. Can you provide some examples of the type of engagement that NYSERDA seeks input into?**

The type of engagement will be driven by the various NYSERDA initiatives, that are either in development or currently in the market, to solicit input from the communities they serve to help design and inform those programs and planning. NYSERDA will regularly engage with the Hubs to identify NYSERDA and local engagement priorities and to plan for the necessary engagement. Examples of engagement may include but are not limited to formal stakeholder engagement such as focus groups, regional meetings, etc. to seek feedback on potential barriers and community needs.

**17. Does there need to be one lead applicant? Even if there is a strong partnership team who will be implementing?**

Yes. NYSERDA can issue the contract to only one prime contractor, with any number of equally important team members who can be listed as subcontractors and/or partners. The December 2021 RFP revision requires a community-based organization to be the prime contractor and lead of the Hub initiative.

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### **18. Is NYSERDA looking for or recommending a specific number of co-leads?**

The co-lead requirement was eliminated in the December 2021 RFP revision. However, proposals can include co-directors, based on the distribution of roles and responsibilities amongst the proposing team.

### **19. Could two (2) organizations co-lead?**

Yes, two organizations can co-lead, however the co-lead requirement was eliminated in the December 2021 RFP revision. Proposers can propose the organizational structure that best reflects their ability to effectively deliver the requested services.

### **20. Can local governmental entities serve as co-leads? For example, county government entities or a municipality.**

The co-lead requirement was eliminated in the December 2021 RFP revision.

### **21. Will Salesforce be used to track customer outcomes? How will outcomes of the activities through the Hubs be tracked/reported?**

Salesforce or another approved Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system will be used by Contractors as directed by NYSERDA. The CRM will primarily be used to manage the contract and track the budget but may also be used to track customer outcomes and activities. Outcomes and activities that are not tracked in Salesforce or another CRM approved by NYSERDA, will be reported monthly using the monthly report template (to be provided by NYSERDA upon contract execution).

### **22. If a community-based organization is interested in co-leading with an organization with more experience, who should submit the proposal? How do they show this partnership?**

The December 2021 revised RFP requires that a community-based organization serve as the prime contractor and lead role of the hub. The lead must demonstrate they can effectively administer the team across the entire region. Proposers need to demonstrate that the team can effectively deliver the services and meet the qualifications in the RFP. Proposals may demonstrate partnerships by submitting Letters of Support/Commitment or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as described in the RFP.

### **23. Might the lead or co-leads be community-based environmental organizations, housing organizations, institutions of higher education or other organizations?**

The co-lead requirement was eliminated in the December 2021 RFP revision. Yes. The RFP requires that the lead be a community-based organization. The structure of the team should be defined by the proposer. Proposing teams, regardless of structure, must demonstrate that they can effectively deliver the services and meet the qualifications in the solicitation.

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**24. Can you please give examples of types of organizations that NYSERDA imagines being lead?**

There are a number of potential community-based organization (CBO) types that can effectively serve in the lead role; NYSERDA expects that a lead CBO can effectively articulate and deliver on a strategic vision for advancing an inclusive clean energy economy in each region, including connecting multidisciplinary organizations and effectively fostering partnerships to increase access to clean energy solutions amongst residents, small businesses, and affordable housing; connecting residents and contractors with workforce and business development opportunities; and otherwise increasing energy awareness and education throughout the region. The December 2021 RFP revision requires that a community-based organization serve as the prime contractor and lead role. Proposals shall outline the structure of the team that will effectively deliver the services in the RFP. Examples of CBOs that may serve as a lead and “prime” include but are not limited to civic organizations, nonprofits, etc.

**25. Does the prime contractor need to identify all possible partners over the term of the contract? Can the proposal indicate that partners will be added over time or is a complete list needed up front?**

The proposer should identify the partnerships needed to deliver the services requested in the RFP. Additional partnerships can and are expected to be established throughout the program period.

**26. If two (2) organizations are not included in each other’s proposals as partners, is it too late to apply?**

The proposer should identify the partnerships needed to deliver the services requested in the RFP. Additional partnerships can and are expected to be established throughout the program period. Proposals received after the due date and time specified in the solicitation will not be accepted.

**27. For projects with multiple co-leads, what is the expectation for information sharing between partners, and between partners and NYSERDA?**

The December 2021 RFP revision eliminated the co-lead role. The reporting structure among partners and to NYSERDA is the “prime” contractor’s responsibility. It’s NYSERDA’s expectation that proposals will define the responsibilities for each team member role as it relates to information sharing. Partners should be in a position to receive and share necessary information to deliver the services requested through the solicitation.

**28. Can the partnership include a for-profit energy organization?**

Yes. Partnerships may include for profit organizations as well as non-profit organizations. Proposers shall demonstrate a strong team with experience serving disadvantaged communities, that supports clean energy and the goals outlined in the RFP.

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### **29. What is your definition of a co-lead?**

The co-lead requirement was eliminated in the December 2021 RFP revision. See questions 18 and 19 regarding co-Directors.

### **30. For Attachment B - Statement of Work, should the proposer edit/insert the information in red?**

Yes. The text in red font is intended to indicate sections of the Statement of Work document that should be edited by the proposer with the details of their strategy.

### **31. Is it required for an organization to demonstrate a history of work in the clean energy industry?**

Yes. Proposals should demonstrate experience and qualifications of the team and demonstrate how the team is best suited to perform the services outlined in the RFP. All partners do not need to have direct experience in the clean energy industry; however, the proposal should explain the relevance of partners' experience and explain how it contributes to the effective delivery of services within the region. Proposers are encouraged to review Section VI. of the RFP for the proposal evaluation criteria.

### **32. Regarding the goal of 40% of benefits going to under-resourced or frontline communities, can you explain a bit more what that means with an example?**

The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act ("Climate Act") advances some of the most ambitious energy and environmental goals in the nation, as well as sets expectations to advance climate justice and equity through the clean energy transition. Specifically, the Climate Act sets a goal for disadvantaged communities to receive at least 35%, with a goal of 40%, of the benefits associated with clean energy or energy efficiency investments. The Climate Act benefits framework is under development by the Climate Action Council and Climate Justice Working Group; however, Regional Clean Energy Hubs are not expected to have to account for a specific level of benefits or investments to disadvantaged communities. NYSERDA and other state agencies will be responsible for measuring and reporting benefits to disadvantaged communities. Examples of benefits that are expected to be delivered through the work of the Hubs include residents in disadvantaged communities receiving incentives through a NYSERDA program(s), or overall increase in health or other economic outcomes (e.g., workforce development) within communities.

### **33. Would benefits to under-resourced or frontline communities include direct grants to community groups for community improvement projects?**

Direct grants to communities will not be provided through this initiative; however, that could potentially be a component of a Local Support Project and that could potentially count towards the benefits directed at disadvantaged communities (as noted above, this framework is still under development).

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**34. Can the Hub director's full-time position, be split between two part-time positions co-leading the hub?**

Yes. NYSERDA will consider proposals that demonstrate or justify the staffing structure to adequately deliver all the services required and effectively manage the team. Proposers should demonstrate that the staffing structure will be effective in delivering the requested services.

**35. Can our staffing plan include new hires?**

Yes. Include the scope of work/skill set for staff that will be hired in the proposal.

**36. Can you elaborate on NYSERDA's opinion of what a successful clean energy hub would look like?**

A successful clean energy hub will bring together multi-disciplinary partnerships from across the region to create opportunities for residents, small business, and affordable housing, with a focus on disadvantaged communities, to participate in and otherwise benefit from the emerging clean energy economy. The RFP provides a description of the measures of success for the different services requested. An example is additional uptake in NYSERDA programs resulting in more clean energy projects implemented by residents in DACs.

**37. Would it be possible to just talk a bit about what the Hub is intended to do that isn't already happening in the region? For instance, there are campaigns that happen today; there is some level of energy education.**

The Hubs RFP increases emphasis on workforce development and diversifying the clean energy economy. Additionally, more formal stakeholder engagement such as focus groups, regional meetings to update the public on initiatives and to obtain input from the community will be part of the scope of the Hubs. Community campaigns will also be a significant focus of the Hubs.

**38. What is the vision for the work of the hub for clean energy heating and cooling campaigns and Clean Energy Communities (CEC)? Will the hub take on some or all of this work?**

NYSERDA anticipates that the work of Hubs and existing campaigns will be coordinated to avoid redundancy or confusion in the market. As the current campaign contracts expire, it will be the responsibility of the Hubs to implement new campaigns identified by NYSERDA or the Hub team. The Hubs will partner with the CEC coordinators to support the program goals.

**39. How will the Hubs coordinate with the CH&C campaigns that extend beyond 6/30/22?**

NYSERDA anticipates the Hubs to coordinate efforts with existing campaigns, including those campaigns through the CEC program, so not to cause confusion in the market or duplicate efforts. As the current Clean Heating and Cooling community campaign

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contracts expire, it will be the responsibility of the Hubs to implement new campaigns identified by NYSERDA or the Hub team based on regional needs and opportunities. The Hubs will partner with the CEC coordinators to support existing efforts and may also be a member of the core team that scopes out and implements community campaigns with local municipalities.

### **40. Does NYSERDA have suggested ranges of percentages that should be spent on varying categories?**

No. NYSERDA wants to see how the contractor proposes to deliver the services in a cost-effective manner. It is expected that level of effort and scope of services will vary by region and over time as market and regional needs evolve.

### **41. Are indirect costs permitted?**

Yes. Proposers should use fully burdened rates inclusive of all indirect costs for the cost proposal. Indirect costs are fixed costs incurred that an organization needs to allocate and recover via their direct labor rate- this would typically include employee (fringe) benefits, rent, utilities, etc.

Direct costs are more variable and can be directly associated with a specific initiative, such as travel and meals (Travel Budget Element 3), web hosting, postage, and printing, etc. (Direct Materials, Supplies, Equipment, and Other Costs Element 2) and shall not be included in the fully burdened rate and are to be listed in the appropriate budget element identified above.

### **42. How is overhead, general and administrative cost defined? What can and cannot be included in that?**

Overhead and Administrative costs are costs incurred that are necessary to support the work an organization performs but are fixed costs not directly associated with any specific project or program. Examples of indirect costs may include costs such as utilities, rent, etc. Indirect costs should be factored into the fully burdened rates in the budget form (Attachment A). Variable costs such as travel, meals, postage, printing, etc. that can be associated with a specific project or program should be listed separately in the appropriate budget categories in the budget form. NYSERDA expects proposers to follow Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Part 31 - Contract Cost Principles and Procedures for what constitutes an allowable vs. unallowable cost. Alcohol is an example of an unallowable cost.

### **43. Can more info be provided about fully burdened costs? Fully burdened rates are professional billing rates an organization charges for labor in order to ensure it covers not only the individual performing the work, but also the costs of running the business which are not otherwise directly paid for under the Agreement. Proposers should speak**

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to an accountant with specific questions about calculations or determining how to classify expenses.

### **44. Is there a list of prohibited spending categories?**

Yes. Regional Clean Energy Hub activities not eligible for funding through this RFP include the direct design and construction of a building or physical site, engineering, and other implementation or construction-related expenses. NYSERDA expects proposers to follow Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Part 31 - Contract Cost Principles and Procedures for what constitutes an allowable vs. unallowable cost.

### **45. What is the workshop specified that needs to be offered twice a year by county? Does it need to be created? Does it exist? Will the Regions participate in creating this?**

The workshops are expected to increase energy literacy and awareness of programs and energy savings tips and are expected to be similar to previous workshop efforts such as Save Energy, Save Dollars. NYSERDA will provide the Hubs with marketing templates, PowerPoints, hands-on demonstration products, etc. NYSERDA will work with all the Hubs to provide replicable training curriculum and the Hubs will have the ability to customize templates and the PowerPoint depending upon their audience.

### **46. How important is the engagement of small commercial, and multifamily buildings? Is this a priority for the Hub?**

Small businesses and affordable housing owners are a focus of the Hub services, in addition to residents, with a focus on those located in underserved rural and otherwise disadvantaged communities.

### **47. How does the prime contractor's designation impact their eligibility for other NYSERDA program funding, whether related to the scope of services or not? Same question for designated team subcontractors.**

Prime proposers should continue to review the eligibility for other NYSERDA funding opportunities to ensure their eligibility; however, proposals must complement, not duplicate, existing initiatives. NYSERDA may not fund the same services under two (2) NYSERDA agreements.

There may be circumstances that result in conflicts of interest where an organization has a number of similar or overlapping NYSERDA agreements. An example of a potential conflict of interest is if a Multifamily partner brings an energy efficiency project into that program and also performs the quality assurance services for that project. NYSERDA can address any specific questions related to potential conflicts of interest before proposals are submitted or during contracting.

### **48. Can we leverage other NYSERDA funds (e.g., the Climate Justice Fellowship) so long as the positions funded are not double accounted for in the Hubs budget.**

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Yes; however, NYS government funding (as defined in Section V. Proposal Requirements of the RFP) cannot be counted as any portion of a proposer's cost-share (if applicable).

### **49. Do you anticipate the definition of disadvantaged communities to change/evolve?**

Yes, the current definition of disadvantaged communities will likely change. The Climate Justice Working Group (CJWG) is charged with developing a set of criteria for identifying disadvantaged communities, and these criteria will be published for public comment when ready.

### **50. Will we be able to define what disadvantaged communities means to us so long as it is rooted in deep thought and relevance to our region?**

No. The CJWG is charged with defining Disadvantaged Communities. Hubs shall focus on disadvantaged communities as currently defined in the RFP and are expected to evolve their services if the criteria changes for disadvantaged communities.

### **51. Will NYSERDA determine what our metrics will be, or will we have the opportunity to impact and/or customize?**

NYSERDA has identified a uniform set of metrics below that will be used to measure program impact and success. However, as NYSERDA needs and market evolves, metrics that are tracked and reported may be re-evaluated.

- Outreach & Awareness - measures of successful outreach efforts include encouraging customers to take measurable action(s) (i.e., implementation of energy improvements, program participation, subscriptions, etc.).
- Community campaigns - measures of successful community campaigns include the number of leads and number of completed clean energy installations, including but not limited to heat pumps and energy efficiency.
- Energy Education - measures of successful energy education efforts include the geographic distribution of sessions within hard to reach under-served rural and DACs, the number of participants at each session, and the number of workshop participants that have taken energy saving actions and/or participated in a clean energy program.
- Project Coordination - measures of successful project coordination efforts include number of projects that leverage wrap around resources/services used to reduce project deferrals (a project that cannot move forward with energy efficiency measures due to structural, health and safety, etc. issues) and increase in the number of clean energy projects implemented.
- Equitable Engagement - measures of successful project coordination efforts include number of participants in sponsored public stakeholder forums and number of recommendations, needs, barriers, or opportunities identified by communities through sponsored public stakeholder forums or other engagement that are elevated to policy makers.

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- Workforce Development - measures of successful workforce development activities include number of partnerships as described above, number of clean energy businesses that work with a Hub to hire individuals from priority populations or disadvantaged communities, and number of MWBEs and/or SDVOBs participating in the clean energy sector.

### **52. How will you measure success? Is there a way to customize those measurements?**

A uniform set of measures of success are outlined in the solicitation. We understand that measures of success may need to change over time as market needs change and the program evolves, but NYSERDA will start out with a standard set of measures of success to assess program impact.

Proposers may propose to capture additional measures of success to measure their own impact; however, the selected proposer will be required to track and report the required metrics outlined in the RFP.

### **53. Do all metrics have equal weight, or are some more important than others?**

All metrics are equally important and will be used to measure impact and progress of the initiative.

### **54. If there are multiple partners, how are funds distributed upon satisfying milestones?**

The prime contractor would be responsible for establishing payment or reimbursement schedules for any subcontractors. NYSERDA enters into an Agreement with one prime proposer (“Contractor”) who will invoice NYSERDA for time and materials and milestone deliverables. The Contractor in turn is responsible to reimburse/pay subcontractors/partners in accordance with their subcontract, Memoranda of Understanding, or partnership agreement.

### **55. Will the milestone-based funding dispersal system, operate like the clean heating and cooling dispersal method?**

The Hub agreements are a hybrid reimbursement structure. The agreement is primarily Time and Materials, with the exception of Task 0.0 Agreement Execution, Task 3,4 Community Campaigns and Task 6.0 Local Projects and Pilots, which are milestone-based deliverables that will be reimbursed upon successful completion of specific deliverable milestones. See Attachment B – Statement of Work.

### **56. How detailed do later year budgets need to be? Are proposers locked into these?**

Proposers shall submit detailed budgets for the entire program period to outline how the proposing team expects to deliver services. Proposals should make clear in the applicable budget form how the budget will ramp up as services and capacity over the program period. However, we anticipate that budgets may change periodically due to changing

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market needs and as the program evolves. NYSERDA will work with the Contractor to assess and modify budget assumptions on an annual basis, or as needed.

**57. To satisfy the BPI requirement, do all partners need to meet the requirement, or can one satisfy it for the team?**

NYSERDA expects that at least one (1) of the Hub team members will possess the required certification.

**58. Does the BPI requirement need to be completed prior to RFP submission? Or does a plan to complete it satisfy the requirement?**

The BPI requirement can be included in the proposal as a planned milestone but should happen within a reasonable timeframe following program launch.

**59. Would you be able to explain the rationale behind requiring the BPI certification? Would other certifications from other organizations such as Association of Energy Engineers or ASHRAE with certifications such as Certified Energy Manager, or Building Energy Management Professional be considered acceptable alternates as they are trained to handle buildings of all sizes?**

NYSERDA's rationale for requiring BPI certifications is to ensure the Hubs have access to a basic level of building science knowledge and will be able to assist customers with assessing opportunities for energy efficiency or other clean energy upgrades, where needed. Teams are not prohibited from proposing other certifications as long as the proposal can demonstrate that the certification will position the Hub to adequately consult and otherwise discuss clean energy upgrades with customers in the residential, small business and affordable housing market segments.

**60. Can you talk a bit more about the workforce development component of the RFP? How much should this be included in the proposal?**

Each Hub team is expected to provide workforce development services as described in the RFP; however, the lead for the Hub does not have to be the workforce delivery mechanism but should facilitate delivery of these services by the team. The structure of the team and each team members role as it relates to the various services is up to the proposing team to determine. The proposal should include a description for how the team will establish partnerships with training providers to provide training for in-demand skills/competencies and provide a pathway for job seekers to access workforce development and job opportunities in the clean energy sector. Hubs are not expected to recreate what NYSERDA already has in place for workforce development.

**61. Can you speak to the supporting materials that NYSERDA plans to give to contractors?**

NYSERDA's intent is to streamline the reporting process by providing templates for monthly reports and quarterly plans. NYSERDA's Corporate Marketing team will also provide branding and messaging to be used across the State. Tool kits and resources

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developed for other programs such as Solarize, Clean Heating & Cooling and materials for energy education workshops, etc. will be provided to the Hubs as a resource. In addition, NYSERDA will also provide facilitator training to the Hubs to allow for more equitable engagement of disadvantaged community members. There will be regular check-ins and an annual conference for Hubs to share best practices and learn from each other.

NYSERDA will also host routine meetings which will include program training of the Advisors; however, it will be the Leads' role to ensure the Hub team is well positioned and trained to provide the services within the Contract. If the Hub has a certain request, the Hubs may request a tool or resource and work with NYSERDA Corporate Marketing to develop.

### **62. Will marketing materials be translated into different languages?**

Yes. NYSERDA is currently in the process of working to secure translation services.

### **63. Will contractors have access to EFS [NYSERDA's loan origination contractor]?**

If it is necessary to deliver the requested services, the Hubs will be granted access to the Loan Origination System used by NYSERDA, currently EFS as managed by Slipstream. Upon contract execution, NYSERDA will work with Hubs to determine system needs.

### **64. Can you confirm the project period?**

The program period will align with NYSERDA's Clean Energy Fund authorization, which currently expires at the end of 2025. Given the expected contracting dates, NYSERDA is expecting that this will be an initial four (4) year program period, anticipated to launch in 2022 and go through Q2 2026. NYSERDA expects to continue the funding of the Hubs following the initial contract term, pending the continuation of the Clean Energy Fund post 2025.

### **65. Is it possible that the funding levels for the individual regions may be altered?**

Any revisions to the RFP, including funding allocations, will be posted on NYSERDA's [Funding Opportunity page](#), NYS Contract Reporter page and via email to stakeholders.

### **66. Are current CEEP contractors seen as the natural delivery mechanism/leads for the Hubs?**

The evaluation criteria listed in the RFP does not favor existing contractors; this is a competitive solicitation open to any proposing team that meets the qualifications and eligibility requirements.

### **67. How will the current CEAs [Community Energy Advisors] work with the Hubs?**

The current Community Energy Engagement Program (CEEP) Community Energy Advisors) refers to the locally based representative hired to perform outreach and

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engagement under RFP 3588. The current CEEP agreements expire prior to the launch of the Regional Clean Energy Hub Initiative, which is a new program that builds on previous outreach and engagement programs such as CEEP and is targeted to launch in Q2 2022.

**68. Is this RFP intended to be an extension and expansion of CEEP?**

No, this is not an extension of CEEP. This new initiative will build upon previous outreach and engagement initiatives, including CEEP, but NYSERDA expects that the Hubs will expand the reach and impact of the CEEP initiative, while advancing an inclusive clean energy economy in each region of the state.

**69. Will there be a gap/transition period from CEEP to the Regional Clean Energy Hub program launch?**

We do not expect a gap in service.

**70. Does NYSERDA intend to use bridge funding to cover gap in funding?**

NYSERDA retains the ability to extend contracts, should any need arise.

**71. What if the Hub asks existing community campaign teams to perform in a way that is not consistent with our current contract, payment schedule, or payment eligibility?**

The Hubs would have no authority to ask current Clean Heating & Cooling (CH&C) campaigns to take specific actions but will instead support and coordinate with existing CH&C campaigns until the current campaigns expire.

**72. If we propose to be a Hub lead and are not selected, can we partner later with the selected Hub lead for campaign work?**

Yes. Additional partnerships can and are expected to be established throughout the program period; however, teaming arrangements and partnerships are at the discretion of the individual organizations.

**73. What technical assistance will be available to the Hubs for their campaign work?**

NYSERDA is in the process of evaluating options for securing implementation/technical assistance for the Regional Clean Energy Hubs. NYSERDA will seek input from selected Contractors on the needs for technical assistance.

**74. What will the role of the Hubs be in conducting outreach on future LMI Heat Pump programs/pilots?**

The Hubs will be expected to work with NYSERDA to promote program or pilot opportunities, not limited to heat pump pilots or programs. NYSERDA and the Hubs will have regular engagement to identify priorities for outreach.

**75. Can my organization be part of multiple Hub proposals with different lead organizations?**

Yes.

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**76. Clean Energy Fund (CEF) ends in 2025? Please explain.**

The Clean Energy Fund (CEF) is currently authorized by the NYS Public Service Commission for a 10-year period. During 2024, NYSERDA anticipates that the NYS Department of Public Service and the NYS Public Service Commission will engage in a public review process of the current CEF and make a determination as to whether the CEF should be reauthorized, and if so, will also specify the scope and budget of any reauthorization.

**77. Since the CBO definition remains elastic to include much larger, institutionalized organizations, how will NYSERDA ensure that such organizations do not impose the rules under which they operate internally on smaller groups on regional teams?**

NYSERDA enters into an Agreement with one prime proposer (“Contractor”). The Contractor in turn is responsible for establishing the terms of any agreements with subcontractors/partners. It is NYSERDA’s expectation that prime contractors will create an inclusive and robust dialogue with subcontractors/partners to optimize the strengths and benefits that each partner brings to the table, and that each party will have the opportunity to discuss any concerns related to the terms of a subcontractor agreement with the Contractor prior to executing an agreement.

**78. Can you define what you mean by "recaptured" for the 10% start up payment?**

The 10% Start-Up funding will be credited (recaptured) at 1/24 over the first 24 months of invoicing.

**79. Does that mean Hubs have to pay that back? Or it will be deducted from the amount they are owed in their invoices?**

The Contractor will be required to reduce (credit) monthly invoices by 1/24 of the 10% milestone payment over the first 24 months of invoicing. For example, the 10% start up payment for a \$3,400,000 award is equal to \$340,000. In this example, the contractor would reduce each of the first 24 monthly invoices by \$14,166.67 ( $\$340,000 / 24 \text{ months} = \$14,166.67$ ).

**80. I believe there is a mistake in how the payment is repaid. You should note that 10% of the total 4-year contract does not equal 1/24 of the billed amount for the first 24 months. It should state that 1/24th of the billed amount will be paid until the total amount of the initial payment is covered.**

Contractors will be provided 10% of the total 4-year budget allocation at contract execution, including local project support and community campaign funding and will be required to credit their monthly invoices for the first 24 months (1/24) of the startup payment. Invoicing is required monthly.

As this questioner points out, the RFP stated that “The Contractor shall account for the 10% startup funding over the first 24-months of the contract by reducing the total monthly invoice by 1/24 (4.17%).”. The RFP has since been corrected and now reflects

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this more accurate method for calculating the reduction amount for each monthly invoice, described in the answer to Question 79 above.

**81. After the initial 10% advance is paid back over 24 months, will there be a subsequent advance for the next 24-month period?**

No, NYSERDA does not envision another advance.

**82. Is there a total grant limit? Maximum limit per year?**

The maximum total regional allocations are located in Table 1 in the solicitation. There is no maximum allocation per year. Proposers shall complete the budget form (Attachment A) to outline how they anticipate using the funds over the program period as capacity and services ramp/scale up.

**83. In New York City, a typical contract will be a 4-year contract to totaling \$6,432, 274, correct?**

Depending on the number of Hubs awarded in the New York City region, the budget for each Hub will be determined at contract negotiation.

**84. If two or more NYC proposers are both overlapping and not identical how do you intend to review and score – e.g., Kings County and Manhattan versus Manhattan and the Bronx.**

See Section VI. Proposal Evaluation for evaluation criteria that will be used to evaluate each proposal, including those for different coverage areas within the NYC region.

**If there are multiple Hubs in New York City, does NYSERDA have a preference for geographic-focused Hubs (e.g., Brooklyn & Queens) vs sectoral Hubs (e.g. multifamily vs 1-4 family)?**

Proposers should outline the boroughs they propose to serve and must demonstrate the ability to effectively provide necessary services in each borough. Each Hub will be expected to manage and provide community-based outreach and engagement to individuals, small businesses, non-profits, and affordable property owners, and other services as described in the RFP. See Section III. Proposer Eligibility and Qualifications under Regional Coverage for additional details.

**85. Are community campaign funds included in proposed budget for region?**

Yes. The community campaign funds are included in the total regional allocation in Table 1 of the RFP.

**Is the funding for community campaigns and pilot projects part of the regional totals for the RFP or funds in addition to the total funds for each region outlined in the RFP?**

Both the community campaign and local project support funding is included in the Regional Allocation Table 1 of the RFP, not in addition to.

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### **86. Will Hub staff serve on the Advisory group?**

The Advisory Group is in development. Further details will be communicated to the Hub network once the structure and composition are determined.

### **87. Can you please explain what the \$300,000 local pilot funding can be used for?**

Use of the local project support funding shall be for efforts that facilitate access to clean energy solutions or improve engagement of disadvantaged communities located within the Hub's service area. Additional details and examples for the Local Project Support pilots are located in Section II. Program Requirements section of the RFP under Additional Services.

### **88. If Hubs are using NYSERDA's Salesforce system to invoice for Time and Materials, can you speak to the details that would be expected? Can the Hub develop a system to track time and summarize activities in NYSERDA Salesforce, or will NYSERDA ask for an entry of each activity? If not, does NYSERDA plan to update and streamline their existing system?**

NYSERDA does not envision the Hubs reporting individual activities in Salesforce or another Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database. As such, Contractors should track their activities, hours and expenses in their own system for invoicing purposes. A template will be provided upon contract execution for Contractors to complete and submit monthly summarizing their activities. See Section V. Proposal Requirements for details regarding the requirement for the Contractor to use Salesforce or an equivalent customer relations management (CRM) system.

### **89. What role do you see a County playing in this?**

See question #7 regarding local governmental entities.

### **90. Am I correct to believe that the total funding allocation table on page 18 of RFP includes the \$250,000 for Community Campaigns and \$300,000 for Local Project Support, meaning that the four-year budget we submit should total \$550,000 less than the total funding allocation for our region?**

Proposals may request up to the maximum amount of funding per region identified in Table 1 of the RFP, which is inclusive of the local project support and community campaign funding. The budget form (Attachment A) should include the local project support and community campaign funding to show how and when the proposer plans to use the funding. All local project support and community campaign funding must be approved by NYSEKDA prior to incurring any costs.

**Page 17 of the RFP says that Local Project Support Proposal Applications are "not intended to be included at this time." Does that mean we are not expected to propose uses of these funds in our proposal narrative or budget?**

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The Local Project Support Application is not required as part of proposals to RFP 4630. However, Proposers should still outline the timing and approximate amounts they plan to use for the Local Project Support projects and pilots in Attachment A Budget Form and Attachment D Schedule of Hub activities. The Local Project Support Application will be provided by NYSERDA to awarded Contractors upon contract execution for consideration and approval by NYSERDA.

### **91. Who do you need resumes and references for?**

Proposals must demonstrate the qualifications and expertise of each Team member. Resumes and references for key personnel shall be included as attachments to the proposal. See Section V. Proposal Requirements in the RFP.

### **92. Does the Community Campaign service item and the funds that go with them replace community campaigns (and the accompanying funds) that NYSERDA has been funding (i.e., the Heat Smart and Solarize campaigns that NYSERDA has been funding in many of the regions across the state)?**

Community Campaign funding through this solicitation is provided to directly implement new or expand the reach of existing community campaigns. These funds cannot be used for campaigns that are either duplicative or are currently funded by NYSERDA.

### **93. Does the prohibition against Hub funding being used for construction-related expenses mean that we could not propose to use Local Project Support funding to help customers to overcome non-equipment barriers to installation of clean energy technology (i.e., electrical panel upgrades).**

The prohibition of funds for construction related expenses is in reference to the standing up a Regional Clean Energy Hub. The local support funding should be used to overcome barriers to implementing clean energy projects which might include structural issues of a project.

### **94. Is there a limit to number of Letters of Support and Letters of Commitment?**

There is no limit; however, Letters of Support, Letters of Commitment and Memoranda of Understanding, should be detailed (as described in the RFP) and should demonstrate meaningful partnerships.

### **95. Page 10 reads "all community campaign funding must be approved by NYSERDA prior to incurring any costs." Does this mean that each specific expense item must be approved, or will Hubs be expected to propose an overall campaign budget that NYSERDA will approve before the campaign begins?**

Contractors should complete and submit the strawman template (to be provided upon contract execution) which includes an overall campaign budget to NYSERDA for consideration for funding through their regional allocation. No costs for campaigns shall be incurred prior to submittal and approval of the strawman template.

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**96. Will NYSERDA's strawman template for community campaigns allow for Hubs to propose multi-year campaigns? Or will these be one year at a time?**

The strawman template provided upon contract execution should outline the duration of each campaign.

**97. Do Proposers have to know in advance what the Community Campaign and Local Project Support needs are going to be?**

No. Proposers should demonstrate they understand the challenges, barriers and opportunities in the region they propose to serve. Once the contract is executed, Contractors will be provided with the Local Project Support application and the strawman template for community campaigns to complete and submit to NYSERDA for review/approval prior to incurring costs.

**98. Under these updated RFP terms, what is the projected time required for the community assessment prior to the start of work rollout - especially as it relates to the Long Island cohort which is under a 1-year term to renew?**

The Long Island region agreement structure is the same as all other regions. An initial 2-year term with an option to renew for another 2 years, at the sole discretion of NYSERDA. The Regional Assessment and Barriers Analysis is due within two (2) months of contract execution. The 10% startup payment will allow selected Contractors to begin work on the Regional Assessment and Barriers Analysis, upon contract execution.

**99. Will NYSERDA be providing a standardized CRM for Hubs? One of the big benefits of having a centralized CRM is the potential to analyze large amounts of data to be able to answer questions that reveal best practices. If NYSERDA is providing a statewide CRM will the contractors be able to access and download the data that they generate from that CRM? Or would they need to save all that data separately before submitting it, in order to be able to analyze it? It would also be helpful for different regions to be able to pool their data to analyze. Is that possible?**

NYSERDA will provide Salesforce or an equivalent CRM for Hubs to use.

**100. Can you speak more to the standardized CRM that NYSERDA plans to develop for Hubs? Would Hubs be able to develop their own CRM system?**

See question #98 related to a CRM. Contractors may develop their own CRM system; however, they will still be required to use the provided CRM as directed by NYSERDA.

**101. Will NYSERDA allow expenses related to a Customer Relations Management (CRM) use be charged to the project? And could different regions join together to jointly use a CRM and split the costs across regions?**

NYSERDA will provide a CRM for awarded Contractors to use, at no cost to the Hubs. Each Hub will be provided with licenses for key personnel that require access to the CRM (e.g., Director(s), Energy Advisors). If a Contractor wishes to use a separate CRM for their own

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tracking purposes they may do so, so long as the system meets Information Technology Services (ITS) policy P03-002 as outlined in the RFP.

### **102. Will there be an associated Hub website statewide or will Regional Hubs be responsible for developing their own?**

NYSERDA will host a statewide website with information for the Regional Clean Energy Hub initiative and contact information for each Hub. Contractors may also include information regarding the Hub on their own website and are expected to include a web-based intake form, which will link back to NYSERDA's Hub webpage (to be updated) to ensure up-to-date and accurate information.

### **103. Will the website have a link to each region's Hub website?**

NYSERDA's [Regional Clean Energy Hub program page](#) will list all the Hub Contractors and their contact information. The website will be updated once contracts have been awarded.

### **104. Will each hub have to create its own hub website, or will there be a central website from NYSERDA?**

It is not a requirement for each Hub to set up their own website; however, they may include details regarding the Hubs and link to NYSERDA's Regional Clean Energy Hub webpage from their organization's website. Additionally, NYSERDA envisions leveraging the selected Contractor's website to possibly host a web-based intake form and links directly to NYSERDA's webpage.

### **105. The RFP says that NYSERDA will provide marketing materials like flyers, but will Hubs be allowed to, or expected to, allocate funds towards other advertising costs like radio?**

See questions #45 and #61 for responses related to resources to be provided to the Hubs. Proposers shall include marketing related expenses in the budget form (Attachment A).

### **106. Are all hubs going to have a unified approach for outreach operations?**

Proposers should detail their outreach strategy based on the regional needs, challenges and opportunities in their proposal.

### **107. Will they be able to click on "North Country" and go to the North Country Hub website?**

The [Regional Clean Energy Program page](#) will be updated once Contracts have been awarded. Further details will be provided once the site is updated.

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**108. If a current Clean Heating & Cooling community campaign spans across two regions and the campaign organization has an office in one region, can they be a subcontractor on a proposal for the region where they have an office and also subcontractor on another region's proposal, where they may not have an office?**

Yes. The proposing team must ensure they meet the staffing requirements in Section III. Proposer Eligibility and Qualifications by possessing the staff and capacity to effectively deliver all the services in the RFP.

**109. How important is it to engage businesses and multifamily homes relative to directly engaging residents from disadvantaged communities? Is it encouraged to have a dedicated staff who is particularly familiar with programs related to commercial and multi-family homes?**

See question #46 related to engagement of small businesses and affordable housing owners. Engagement of businesses and multifamily buildings in disadvantaged communities is part of the scope of the Hubs.

**110. Can Hub contractors utilize NYSERDA's internship, Cooperative Advertising, Flextech or other reimbursement programs as additional funding resources?**

See question #48 related to the use of other NYSERDA funding.

**111. As the Needs and Barriers Analysis requires lots of community and other data inputs will the Needs and Barriers Analysis reports be standardized across the Clean Energy Hubs? In other words, will regions be trying to answer the same questions, or will it be up to the regions to determine their communities' interests?**

Contractors will be provided a template with questions – standardizing the information submitted.

**112. I hope that NYSERDA will not make any firm decisions about which CRM platform to use without input from the hubs!**

Upon contract execution, NYSERDA will work with Hubs to determine system needs.

**113. Will hubs be required to have unified outreach fliers?**

See question #61 regarding the resources that will be provided for the Hubs.

**114. Proposers have 7 weeks from the date of the revised RFP to the due date to form partnerships. Will NYSERDA be extending the deadline?**

The solicitation due date has been extended to January 27, 2022, to provide a total of 19 weeks for proposers to develop proposals and establish teams. Additionally, a web-based Clearinghouse was established in Summer 2021 and is available to proposers as a resource to promote teaming arrangements. To ensure we remain on target with regard to the anticipated launch date of this initiative, the due date remains January 27, 2022. While at this time we do not contemplate further extensions to the proposal deadline,

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any revisions to the RFP, including the due date, would be posted on NYSERDA's [Funding Opportunity page](#), NYS Contract Reporter page and via email to stakeholders.

**115. What does the RFP refer to in this statement: "Describe how the Team members will contribute to successful completion of the objectives and goals of this RFP." Does this refer to what each team member will do? Or does this refer to how our Hub structure will provide the support to each staff to be successful? Or something else?**

This statement refers to the roles and responsibilities of each team member in the successful delivery of services in this RFP.

**116. Can proposers from different regions propose joint positions for highly specialized skill sets (for example a marketing expert)?**

Proposers should include all staff anticipated to deliver services for each Hub, including support roles, and indicate the full time or full-time equivalent (FTE) status for each staff in the Staffing Plan (Attachment C). Proposers must submit a separate proposal for each Region they propose to serve.

**117. Can Energy Education include presentations to small groups from local communities on energy impacts on environment and climate change? Such information can raise awareness on environmental justice issues and lead to increased interest in clean energy projects.**

Yes. A primary goal of this initiative is to build energy literacy.

**118. Who should letters of support be addressed to?**

Letters of support may be addressed to Bianca Shaw and Lori Clark or NYSERDA RFP 4630.