



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

WIOA Regional and Local 4-Year Plans
Issued: September 18, 2020

Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC)
A Proud Partner of America's Job Center of California Network
525 Wall Street, Chico, CA 95928
(530) 892-9600

NoRTEC Is an Equal Opportunity Employer and provider of employment and training programs.

Michael Cross, Executive Director
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SECTION 1: PURPOSE, FUNDING AND BACKGROUND

RFP PURPOSE AND TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

The Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC) is seeking a Consultant or teams of Consultants experienced in workforce development and strategic planning to support the planning, data collection, writing and preparing of the multi-year NoRTEC 4-Year Regional and Local Plans. In accordance with the requirements stipulated in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), this plan serves as the guiding planning document to support the region's approach to workforce development and coordination for the 11-county region. The Scope of Service for the work is attached as Exhibit A and provides information regarding the level of effort required, as well as the specific tasks to be accomplished.

Proposals may be developed by more than one applicant that partner to do certain tasks within the project. These individuals or firms must indicate how the partnership will produce the desired product(s).

PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL AND DUE DATE

Proposals must be received in the NoRTEC Administrative Office no later than **5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 16, 2020**. Proposals must be e-mailed to: Andrea Campos, Director of Program Administration, E-mail: acampos@ncen.org.

E-mailed proposals must be formatted as PDF. Proposals in other file formats will not be reviewed. Faxed proposals will not be accepted.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

RFP Release Date	September 18, 2020
Proposal Deadline	October 16, 2020
Tentative Bidder's Conference	TBD
Formal Review of Proposals	October 19, 2020
Bidder Interviews, tentative	TBD
Award of Contract	October 26, 2020
Anticipated Contract Start Date	Immediately after Award TBD

**These dates/times are subject to change*

RFP CONTACT

RFP Contact Person and mailing address for questions about the proposal process or technical issues:

Andrea Campos, Director of Program Administration

NoRTEC
525 Wall Street, Chico CA 95928
acampos@ncen.org
(530) 892-9600 x205

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

OVERVIEW OF NORTEC

The Northern Rural Training & Employment Consortium (NoRTEC) headquartered in Chico, California, administers Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs in eleven Northern California counties. Established in 1983, NoRTEC is led by a Governing Board and Workforce Development Board (WDB) that oversee a broad range of programs and initiatives. The WDB includes representatives from small, medium and large businesses, labor organizations, education, economic development, community-based organizations and one-stop partners.

Each Local Workforce Development Area in California is part of a larger regional group of Local Areas, collectively known as a Regional Planning Unit (RPU). NoRTEC's eleven county consortium is both a Workforce Development Board and Regional Planning Unit. NoRTEC is a special district organized under a Joint Powers Agreement to provide United States Department of Labor (USDOL) Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) services and has established contracts with nonprofit agencies in eleven counties to ensure job seekers and businesses have access to a comprehensive array of job training and employment services. The counties in NoRTEC service area are Butte, Del Norte, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity. The NoRTEC Administrative Entity is located in Chico, California. Additional information about NoRTEC can be obtained at www.ncen.org.

RFP BACKGROUND

The WIOA was enacted in July 2014, with the intention of increasing economic competitiveness by strengthening the workforce development system through a coordinated system, which serves individuals with barriers to employment. WIOA strengthens the alignment of its core programs and other essential programs and reaffirms the role of the America's Job Center of California (AJCC), for the delivery of training and career services to jobseekers, aligned to meet the needs of employers.

Under guidance from the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) and the Employment Development Department (EDD), NoRTEC sets program policies in alignment with WIOA. NoRTEC provides administrative oversight of workforce development activities, which includes the oversight of contracted service providers for the AJCC, youth programs and services.

As outlined under WIOA Section 106, Regional Plans provide a roadmap for alignment of resources and investments to meet specific outcomes within the 15 Regional Planning Units (RPUs) in California. Regional Plans are used to articulate how RPUs will build intentionality around industry sector engagement, drive workforce development outcomes across multiple

jurisdictions, and expand on-ramps to career pathways for individuals who experience barriers to employment.

As outlined in WIOA Section 108, Local Plans provide an action plan for operationalizing the road map laid out in the Regional Plan by describing how individuals' access services through the America's Job Centers of CaliforniaSM (AJCC) system. Local Plans are used to articulate how Local Boards will coordinate with local partners to ensure a person-centered service-delivery.

In addition to the federal planning requirements, WIOA indicates that Regional and Local Plans should be consistent with the vision and goals of the State Plan. Together, the Plans will provide direction for implementing effective workforce development strategies to propel economic development in the NoRTEC region, which include, but not be limited to sector strategies, development of career pathways, and integration of services across partner agencies.

NoRTEC realizes that Regional and Local plans will be developed during a changing and unprecedented economic and workforce climate. Due to effects of the public health crisis, ongoing natural disasters and changing regulations, the selected Consultant must have a flexible approach, an ability to adopt to new ways of outreach and engagement and ability to respond to new regulations.

The selected consultant will be responsible for preparing all sections of the Four-Year Regional and Local Plans under the direction of NoRTEC staff and consistent with the EDD Directive for Regional and Local Planning Guidance for PY 2021-2024, which are currently being developed¹.

For reference, please see:

EDD Directive : [REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR PY 2017-2020](#)

EDD Directive: [REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANS PY 17-21 – TWO YEAR MODIFICATIONS](#)

NoRTEC's 2017 and 2020 Regional and Local Plans and subsequent modifications can be found at www.ncen.org, under "Our Region".

Regional and Local Plans must be submitted to the CWDB no later than April 30, 2021

¹ The California EDD has drafted Regional and Local Planning Guidance for PY 2021-2024. NoRTEC anticipates the Final Directive to be issued in late October 2020. In order to meet the State March 2021 deadline for the new Regional and Local Plan Directive for the 11-county region, NoRTEC has decided to initiate the procurement process for the preparation of the Plans.

SECTION 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION, DELIVERABLES AND FUNDING

PROJECT APPROACH

The selected consultant will lead the local Four-Year Planning effort with direction by the NoRTEC Workforce Development Board, NoRTEC staff, key-stakeholders and partner agencies for the timely completion of the Plan. The consultant will have overall responsibility for the project. Accordingly, the consultant must be knowledgeable about WIOA and state workforce development requirements. The consultant must also have demonstrated capacity to perform the tasks necessary to complete the project on time and on budget. The consultant, with NoRTEC staff oversight, will be primarily responsible for work related to project management, preparation of the required documents, stakeholder engagement, citizen participation and development of the draft and final Four-Year Regional and Local Plans.

NoRTEC staff will provide assistance with public engagement (identifying partners and contact information), WDB interaction, data collection and meeting preparation and coordination. The Consultant will be responsible to ensure that all necessary components of the process and Plan are completed in a timely manner.

To accomplish these tasks, the successful consultant will collaborate with NoRTEC staff and partner organizations and provide the following services:

- **Project Management:** The consultant will provide all project management for the creation and production of the Four-Year Plans. This includes maintaining a detailed timeline. The Director of Program Administration, Andrea Campos, will be the contact person identified to coordinate with the selected consultant.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Citizen Participation:** The consultant will work with NoRTEC staff to engage the local community and Workforce system stakeholders and incorporate this information into the Four-Year Local Plan per State directive. Due to the current health pandemic and natural disasters, it is anticipated the consultant will have experience holding virtual stakeholder and community engagement meetings. Virtual public engagement may include live or recorded presentations (such as webinars or livestreams), online surveys, comment forms, interactive maps and webpages with project information and key documents. The consultant will be expected to develop a stakeholder and inclusive community engagement plan design to reach those most impacted by high and chronic employment, consistent with the State Directive in development.
- **Review and Analysis of Data:** In drafting the Four-Year Local Plans, local and regional labor market information will be used with a focus on the needs of local businesses. NoRTEC's Labor Market Information has been continually updated since the preparation of the last Regional and Local Plan and can be found at www.ncen.org under "Our Region".
- **Plan Preparation:** The Plan must be in accordance with federal and state requirements and the final Plan must be prepared using EDD policies and templates. The consultant is

responsible for submitting sections of the Plans as they are completed and for submitting the complete Four-Year Plans to NORTEC for final review no later than the deadline specified in this document.

TIMELINE

Consultants are asked to provide a proposed schedule for the completion of activities. The following deadlines, however, must be included.

- Local Plan posted for 30-day public comment period – February 14, 2020
- Update plans including public comments – March 12, 2020
- Local Plan finalized (approved by Local Board and submitted to the State) – before March 31, 2020

FUNDING

NORTEC anticipates the cost to update the Regional and Local Plans to range from \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00.

SECTION 4: PROPOSAL FORMAT

SPECIFIC PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

All proposals must be organized and assembled according to the requirements of this section and in the order described:

1. Proposal Cover Sheet. The cover sheet should include the name of the respondent, type of organization, address and contact information and name of person authorized to submit the proposal on behalf of the organization.
2. Executive Summary. Each proposal must include an executive summary which at a minimum describes the respondent organization, summarizes its relevant experience and qualifications and outlines the scope of services being proposed. The Executive Summary is limited to two (2) pages.
3. Narrative. A written narrative statement to include:
 - Experience and background of bidder in providing services requested in this RFP, including a record of past performance, the ability to meet specifications, and the technical skills to accomplish the work. Bidder should exhibit knowledge of the national workforce system funded in part by the Workforce Opportunity and Innovation Act, and the relationship of the system with key economic stakeholders

- Specific plan for the collection, analysis, and reporting of data, including the approach in accomplishing the specific tasks, including a plan for publication, distribution and implementation
 - Names, qualifications and experience of personnel to be assigned to the project.
 - A budget and timeline setting forth specific deliverables and dates with a proposed final delivery date.
4. Letters of Reference. Each proposal may include up to five (5) signed letters of reference from entities for whom the bidder has provided services.
 5. Optional Bidder Attachments. Optional attachments are limited to five (10) pages.

SECTION 5: EVALUATION CRITERIA

COMPLIANCE REVIEW

Upon receipt of proposals, staff will review submitted proposals for completeness and compliance with the terms and conditions of the RFP. All proposals must adhere to the required format and, to be competitive, must include all the requested information. Proposals that do not adhere to these requirements will be determined non-responsive and will not be considered for funding. NoRTEC reserves the right to reject any proposal submitted.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

NoRTEC will put together an RFP Scoring Panel of staff who will score and rank all proposals that meet the compliance requirements described below. The RFP Scoring Panel will score and rank all proposals using the criteria described within the RFP, and specifically developed to examine the competence of the Respondents and suitability of their proposals. The RFP Scoring Panel may assign each proposal a maximum of 100 points. Panel members will review and rank each proposal and, based on their knowledge and assessment of the proposals, recommend one of the respondents for designations and contract negotiation.

In general proposals will be reviewed using these criteria:

Criteria

Criteria	Assigned Points
<p>Approach: The written response demonstrates a clear, streamlined and articulate strategy for achieving the scope of work for the development of the Regional and Local Plans that allows for flexibility and course correction. A specific outline of how the work will be performed.</p>	40

Special resources offered that are relevant to the successful completion of the project. Feasibility of workplan within timeframe and budget.	
Community Engagement: Knowledge of local area, key stakeholder groups. The proposal demonstrates a clear strategy for facilitating the community forums, focus groups and/or meetings, to gather feedback from the stakeholders and impacted community in the development of the Regional and Local Plans. The strategy must demonstrate inclusive outreach and engagement to specific populations most impacted by barriers to employment.	20
Organization/Qualifications: The written response demonstrates that the prospective party has the capacity to complete and carry out the scope of work Professional background and qualifications of team members and firms comprising the team. Current workload, available staff and resources. Capacity and flexibility to meet schedules, including any unexpected work. Ability to perform on short notice and under time constraints. Cost control procedures in design and construction. Ability to perform numerous tasks at the same time.	40
Total	100

MINORITY BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

NoRTEC, as a recipient of State and Federal funds, subscribes to the practices below and will fully comply with Federal, State, and Local laws and directives governing non-discrimination, equal opportunity, and affirmative action in all activities.

- No person shall be discriminated against whatsoever on the grounds of race, religion, color, age, sex, physical handicap, or national origin.
- No person shall because of race, religion, color, age, sex, physical handicap, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity funded entirely or in part by the City, the State, or the Federal Government.
- Affirmative Action shall be taken by all levels of governments, where necessary, to support the underlying objectives of said anti-discrimination policies.

To further support policies relative to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and non-discrimination, NoRTEC will make every effort to ensure that Minority Business Enterprises have the maximum practicable opportunity to participate in construction contracts and in the procurement of goods, professional services, and supplies. Contractors are encouraged to indicate in their RFQ response if they are a certified minority business.

REVIEW PROCESS

NoRTEC may, at its discretion, request presentations by or meetings with any proposers to clarify or negotiate modifications to the proposals. However, NoRTEC reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposals submitted. Therefore, proposals should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms the Proposer can provide from both technical and price standpoints. NoRTEC anticipates awarding the contract to the proposer with the highest total points.

ACCESS TO SCORE SHEET AND COMMENTS

Individual score sheets and comments used during the evaluation process may be provided in the form of summaries as prepared by NoRTEC staff. Actual individual scores sheets will not be disclosed. These summaries will be provided to applicants of the RFP who submit a written request. Requests for this information shall be responded to within ten (10) business days of the final contract/agreement recommendations and any appeals submitted. The purpose for releasing this information is for technical assistance and continuous improvement and not for purpose of an appeal.

NEGOTIATION/AGREEMENT

All Respondents shall designate an authorized negotiator. (The name and contact information for this person must be included on the title page of the proposal.) This designated person must be empowered to make binding commitments for the successful Respondent and its subcontractors, if any. NoRTEC reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of the contract/agreement with the successful Respondent(s). Items that may be negotiated include, but are not limited to, the scope of work, the staff as proposed, the implementation schedule, and the final award amount.

NOTIFICATION OF AWARD

It is expected that a decision will be made within 15 days of the closing date. Upon conclusion of final negotiations with the successful proposer, all proposers will be informed in writing of the name of the successful firm/individual.

It is expected that a letter of agreement will be executed with the successful bidder in October 2020.

SECTION 6: DISCLAIMERS AND GENERAL PROVISIONS

At the discretion of NoRTEC, if it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, an addendum will be provided to all known recipients of this RFP and posted on NoRTEC's website. Any clarification will become an addendum to this RFP.

Respondents are responsible for checking the website frequently to remain informed about the procurement process and other information that may affect this RFP (e.g. WIOA reauthorization, changes to performance measures, and revisions to the timeline).

RIGHT TO CANCEL

NoRTEC reserves the right to cancel all or any part of this RFP at any time without prior notice and reserves the right to modify the RFP process and time line as is deemed necessary.

NONRESPONSIVE PROPOSALS

Proposals may be judged nonresponsive and removed from further consideration if any of the following occur:

- The proposal is not received on a timely basis in accordance with the terms of this RFP.
- The proposal does not include all the specified elements.
- The proposal is not adequate to form a judgment by the reviewers that the proposed undertaking would comply with all the auditing standards and requirements specified in this RFP.
- The proposal indicates that the audit reports would not be made available to NoRTEC in the time frames outlined in this RFP.

THE APPEALS PROCESS

NoRTEC must receive written notice of the Proposer's intent to appeal the decision within five (5) working days of receipt of notice of award. Proposer will have a total of 15 days in which to submit a written appeal of NoRTEC's decisions. All grievances arising out of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or this RFQ must be filed according to NoRTEC's established grievance procedures.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

It is the policy of NoRTEC to prohibit ex-parte communication with any board member, NoRTEC staff, consultants or other persons serving as an evaluator during the procurement process. Respondents that directly contact board members or evaluators risk elimination of their proposals from further consideration.

DISCLAIMERS

1. This RFP does not commit the NoRTEC Workforce Development Board (WDB) to award a contract.
2. Any changes to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act program, funding level or board direction may result in a change in contracting. In such instances, NoRTEC will not be held liable for what is in the bidder's proposal or this Request for Proposals package.

3. Proposals submitted for funding consideration must be consistent with, and if funded, operated according to, the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act legislation, all applicable federal regulations, State of California policies, and NoRTEC policies and procedures.
4. Proposers are advised that most documents in the possession of NoRTEC are considered public records and subject to disclosure under the federal and state public records laws.
5. NoRTEC may require selected proposers to attend oral interviews, participate in negotiations and rewrite their statements of work as agreed upon during contract negotiations.
6. All grievances arising out of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or this RFP must be filed according to NoRTEC's established grievance procedures.
7. All proposers must ensure equal opportunity to all individuals. No individual in the NoRTEC Regional area shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funded program or activity because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, English proficiency, or political affiliation or belief.
8. All proposers must ensure access to individuals with disabilities pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Attachment A

Scope of Work

Preliminary Regional and Local Planning Guidelines

BACKGROUND

This Scope of Work provides a working outline of the regional and local planning requirements that are included in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and final regulations to guide discussions with regional and local partners. Please read the state vision, as it is intended to inform the local and regional planning process. In addition, please refer to the NoRTEC 2017-2020 Regional, Local and Strategic Plans and the prior EDD Directive [2017-2020 Regional and Local Plan Requirements](#).

The planning requirements that are included in the WIOA and final regulations are outlined in the State of California Regional and Local Planning Guidelines which are currently being developed. Each local workforce innovation area in California will submit a plan that includes the *regional planning components* and *local planning components* as required by WIOA and the California EDD. For purposes of regional and local plan compliance, it is expected that regional and local plans will need to include the below information:

REGIONAL PLAN COMPONENTS:

Workforce and Economic Analysis: A detailed analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the region as well as an analysis of the current workforce. The analysis should provide insight in to the current and future needs of employers and job seekers in the region – especially considering the changing regional economic dynamics associated with the current health pandemic and natural disasters. The data in this analysis will then be used as a foundation for informing the rest of the plans. Data for this analysis may include, but is not limited to, data obtained from NoRTEC Tableau dashboard/Occupational Outlooks/Regional/County profiles, public LMI data, real time business data and/or surveys, workforce system customer feedback, data obtained through partner engagement.

The analysis should include:

- An analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.
- An analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.
- An assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.
- An analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the region.
- An analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.
- An analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.
- How is the region changing in terms of demographics, labor supply and occupational demand?

- What special populations exist in the region, what is their magnitude, and what are the policy and service implications to meet the needs of these individuals?

Benchmarking and Using Key Indicators to Measure Progress

Previous Regional Planning cycles utilized Regional Indicators to assess coordination and measure progress within the RPUs. The indicators provided measures of processes and activities utilized by RPU partners to establish a foundation (benchmark) for driving a regional approach and aligning the needs of regional industry sectors and employers. Using the above economic and workforce analysis, the Regional Plan will address the current and future indicators of success for the following:

Demand-Driven Skills Attainment: Regional Sector Pathways and Industry-Valued Post-Secondary Credential Attainment

A description of:

- How the RPU and regional partners will expand or develop and implement sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region.
- How the RPU and regional partners will increase participant access to training and education programs that align with regional labor market dynamics.
- How the RPU and regional partners will ensure the training and education programs identified above lead to post-secondary credentials that are industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable.
- How the RPU will work with the Department of Industrial Relations Division of Apprenticeship Standards to improve program alignment and expand pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities in the region.

Enabling Upward Mobility for All Californians: *Quality Jobs that Provide Economic Security*

A description of:

- How the RPU will prioritize working with employers who provide quality jobs that provide economic security through family sustaining wages and comprehensive benefits.
- How the RPU will implement incumbent worker training strategies to ensure progression along career pathways.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

The Regional Plan will:

- Describe how the RPU and regional partners will work with employers and training providers to ensure that historically unserved and underserved communities have equal access to the regional sector pathways, earn and learn opportunities, and other longer-term approaches identified by the RPU.

- Describe how the RPU and regional partners will work with employers and training providers to ensure that historically unserved and underserved communities are able to access all appropriate interventions, including a range of supportive services, to ensure successful completion of the regional sector pathways, earn and learn opportunities, and other longer-term approaches identified by the RPU.

Aligning, Coordinating, and Integrating Programs and Services

The Regional Plan will:

- Describe administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate, for the region.
- Describe regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery agreements or Memorandums of Understanding.
- Describe the coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers.
- Describe the coordination of supportive services such as transportation, child care, housing, etc.
- Describe how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA Section 116(c).

LOCAL PLAN COMPONENTS:

The Local Plan demonstrates operational alignment with the strategic objectives of the respective Regional Plans, drives coordination with local partners, and highlights key service-delivery strategies. Recognizing the need for flexibility to determine the nature, scope, and depth of partnerships based on local and regional needs and priorities, Local Boards should use the planning process as a tool for building upon and furthering existing partnerships that were established under the previous Local and Regional planning and modification processes. This includes partnerships with the WIOA core and required program partners identified under WIOA Section 121. This also includes the Cal Fresh Employment & Training, Child Support Services, Competitive Integrated Employment, and English Language Learners, the Foreign Born and Refugees partnerships established in [WSD18-01 - Regional and Local Plans PY 17-21 – Two Year Modifications](#). Areas that will be addressed in the Local Plan include:

The Local Overview

- Detail on local program alignment to implement State Plan policy strategies including an overview and analysis of the workforce development and education programs and services that are available within the region.
- A description of the workforce development activities, including education and training, in the Local Area. This should include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to

address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers.

NoRTEC's Strategic Vision

- The Board's strategic vision to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency over the next four years. This should include the Local Board's service-delivery strategies for ensuring equitable access to the regional sector pathways and industry recognized post-secondary credentials identified in your respective Regional Plan. The Strategic Vision should include an analysis of the existing NoRTEC Strategic Plan and inclusion of additional goals and objectives based on the Regional Plan analysis.

Based on the above described information, the Local Plan will include a description of:

- Core Program Partner Coordination: A description of local coordination with the WIOA core program partners over the next 4 years.
- AJCC System Partner Coordination: A description of how AJCC partners will work together to define roles, facilitate access to services and resources and establish agreement for ongoing coordination.
- State Strategic Partner Coordination: A description of new partnerships established under the previous Local Plan modification will continue to coordinate service.
- Title I Administration and Service Description, including the provision of adult, dislocated workers and youth services.
- A description of training and staff capacity.
- A description of stakeholder and community engagement including accessibility and inclusivity.

Note: This guide and the information requirements are based on the latest regulatory information available at the time of publication. Additional information may be required based on any new federal or state regulations that are issued after the release of this guide.

The Regional and Local Plan format must follow the October 2020 State EDD Directive for Regional and Local Plans.