**FY16 Regional STEM Network FAQ**

**Q.** How much consideration will reviewers give to proposed geographic boundaries? In other words, will proposals with an extensive, defined, geographic region score higher than proposals with a more limited geographic region?

**A.** Reviewers will be interested in the geographic region defined in an applicant’s proposal but more from the lens of the number of school and business partners relative to the density of the region and less from the lens of overall geographic coverage. The ultimate goal is that we create a system of networks that serve all regions of the state.

**Q.** If your goal is for every corner of the state to be part of a regional STEM network, why did the RFP lack clearly define geographical regions?

**A.** Though we do, ultimately, desire that all regions of the state connect through a system of regional STEM networks, this RFP seeks to have that process happen organically through a myriad of conversations, negotiations, planning and visioning among many regional players.

**Q.** Will reviewers consider the concentration of schools and businesses relative to the defined geographic boundary when they evaluate the proposals?

**A.** Yes, the reviewers will consider the density of the population and concentration of schools and businesses when considering proposed geographical boundaries. Reviewers will not be restricted by prior boundary delineations.

**Q.**  Where the RFP doesn’t articulate defined geographic regions, are we concerned some geographical locations may be claimed on more than one proposal creating overlap?

**A.** We are committed to work with applicants where such overlap may occur.

**Q.** May we have a list of those who participated in the RFP information session along with their contact information?

**A.** Yes, we will share the participant list with anyone who seeks it. Contact Keith Connors, Program Manager of the STEM Pipeline Fund, for the list. Keith’s email is: kconnors@bhe.mass.edu.

**Q.** If we focus our proposal on advancing the STEM Council priority of supporting early college strategies, does the strategy need to include the creation of duel enrollment courses?

**A.**  No, early college strategies do not need to be specifically connected to duel enrollment.

**Q.** Are there defined budget limits for any expense category such as administration or travel?

**A.** No, the RFP does not stipulate any budget limits. We expect budgets will reflect responsible expenditures and reasonable limits.

**Q.** Are we expecting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the lead applicant and its associated institution or just a letter of commitment?

**A.** An MOU is not necessary. A letter of commitment, confirming the willing partnership between the Network leadership and the host institution, is sufficient.

**Q.**  How firm is the June 1st proposal submission deadline? Is it possible to extend the submission date?

**A.** The June 1st proposal submission deadline is a firm date. We recognize the interest in extra planning time before submission but we need time to thoughtfully review the proposals for award recommendations. Extending the proposal deadline would leave little time for review before the state of the new fiscal year (July 1).

**Q.** In addition to the priorities outlined in the RFP, should our proposals align to the goals of the State STEM Plan?

**A.** Although the State STEM Plan 2.0 is an active document, proposals do not need to directly address or refer to the five goals in it. However, the Commonwealth still hopes to achieve the State STEM Plan goals so proposals that make direct connection to the goals will be reviewed favorably.

**Q.** May we request more than the $50,000 maximum award as designated in the RFP?  For example, would you consider awarding more grant dollars to a proposal covering a wider geography and denser concentration of school districts and businesses then a proposal covering less geography and/or a smaller population?

**A.** We established the grant awards for each STEM Network at a fixed cost of $50,000.  We understand each network will have a different geographic outline and population density but other factors come into play that equalize the funding support.  For example, less dense regions typically have larger geographic areas and spend more funds on travel, etc.  If there are future funding rounds, we will analyze the expenses of grantees for reconsideration of how grant funds are distributed but for this funding round, the costs are fixed.